

RAZZORCAKE

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(young governor;
marvelous darlings;
fucked up)

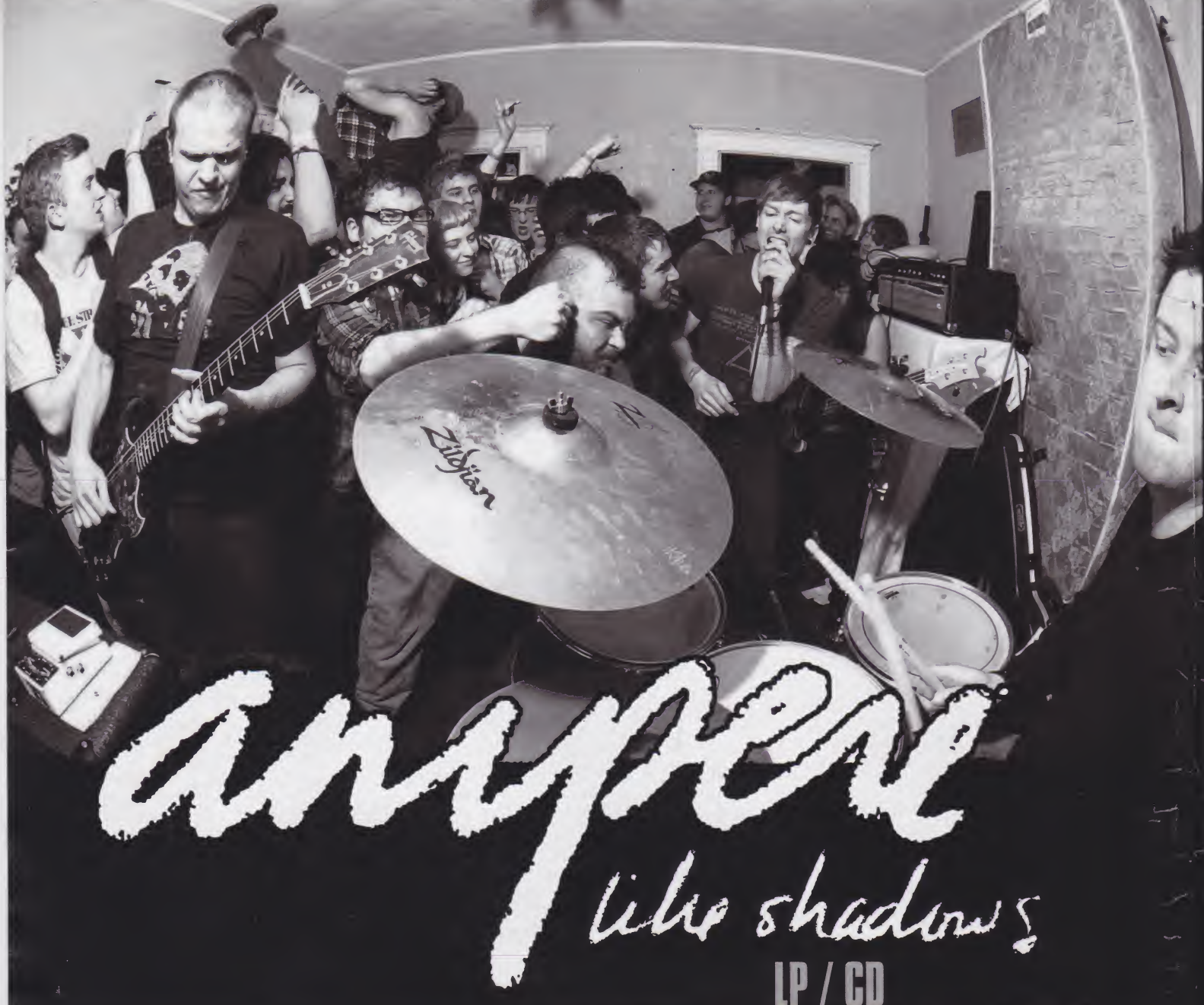
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FOUND FOOTAGE FESTIVAL**



\$4
issue 63



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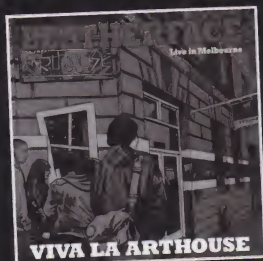


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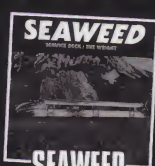
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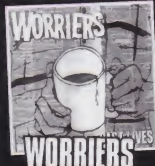
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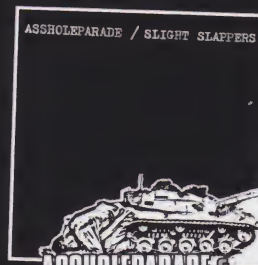
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On Fri., August 12th, Razorcake will be celebrating its 10 Year Anniversary at our local Highland Park American Legion Hall, 227 N Avenue 55, LA, CA 90042-4109: The Arrivals (Chicago), Hex Dispensers (Austin – first show ever in L.A.), Young Offenders (SF – first show ever in L.A.), and Toys That Kill (San Pedro). Starts at 9 PM. All ages. It'll rule. \$10. Includes year-long subscription or sub. renewal.

Razorcake provides a unique, unduplicated resource and authoritative voice for do-it-yourself punk culture.

Razorcake believes in a form of punk that is community-friendly, truly independent, positive, progressive, relevant, and exciting.

It is currently a magazine, website, book, and record publisher providing the highest quality content possible in a culture that is often misunderstood, misrepresented, and exploited.

We are a cohesive home and forum for over 120 independent volunteer writers, photographers, and illustrators around the world. In the first ten years of existence, *Razorcake* has published over 19,000 reviews of independent records, videos, zines, comic books, and live shows. We also post a weekly podcast of independent music (165 and counting).

Our open participation and solicitation policy means that anybody can potentially become a contributor.

Collectively, we provide a legitimate, critical, alternative, non-profitting approach to music and are the only bonafide 501(c)(3) non-profit music magazine in America. Although *Razorcake* champions the local and has a national presence, *Razorcake* also self-administers

international distribution of the magazine to over twenty countries.

If *Razorcake* disappeared, the strength of the community we are apart of and have created will be weakened.

We believe the following...

DIY punk is a valid, continually evolving culture and that outside corporate interests in DIY punk have overwhelmingly been predatory. We're still waiting for an example to the contrary.

- *Razorcake* and the culture it promotes can thrive without those exploitative interests and incursions.

We believe that a trustworthy network of information in DIY culture creates a more efficient, critical, and stronger culture.

- *Razorcake*, as a group, has been a daily, active participant in this culture since January, 2001.

Much like vinyl records, we believe that publishing in a physical format preserves content that is consistent with the DIY punk ethos.

- Although we utilize and explore digital communication, the heart and soul of *Razorcake* is publishing a hard copy, printed zine.

- *Razorcake* is a rare, non-exploitive conduit for thousands upon thousands of underground artists who continue to be the largely underappreciated building blocks of music in America.

It is *Razorcake's* goal to continue building a viable twenty-first century framework that supports DIY culture and truly independent punk.

If you are of the means, please consider a tax deductible donation to *Razorcake*.

—Todd Taylor

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☐ Yes! I'd like to be on the *Razorcake* Website Army list.

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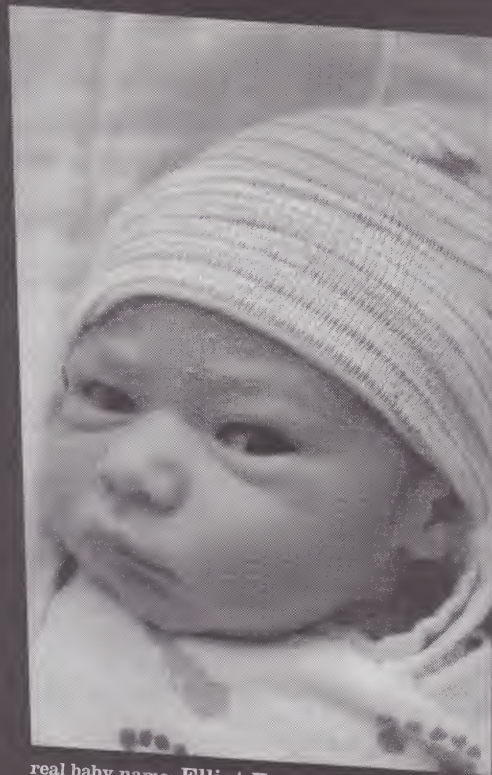
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real baby name: **Antonia Marie DeMedici**
punk baby name: **Toni Disorder**



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real baby name: **Jimmy Carlson**
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The Worst Type of Equal

It's a tragedy that so many people in the world are born without ears.

What other excuse can there be for our cover dude Canadian Ben Cook not being a household name, even if that household's DIY punk music? Oh, yeah. There are lots of excuses: money for promotion; computer spiders, bots, code insertions, and interweb tomfoolery; and "celebrity" endorsements.

We live in weird times.

As a music fan, I feel like I'm watching tornadoes. Torrents of 0s and 1s are whipping down through millions of electronic devices. Meanwhile, thousands of square miles of the musical landscape remain essentially still. Unseen. Unheard.

If you believe the titans of industry, computer manufacturers, and telecommunications companies, music's more available than ever before. Just a click or touch away—if you can find it while simultaneously ignoring the digital tornadoes.

It's common knowledge to the music industry that if you're a seeker—and not a consumer who lets software choose "like" songs based on "tempo, singing style, and lyrical content"—you're a rare breed in this digital age, barely worth the effort to market to.

Conversely, the majority of people I know who own, operate, and run DIY punk labels are struggling. Revenue from electronic downloads is less lucrative than recycling analog bottles and cans.

All too often, I feel like I'm on the side of the road, holding a cardboard sign—"Support the 1%"—as glassy-eyed commuters speed by, faces illuminated by glowing screens, in a hurry to be somewhere else.

One percent. That's what I call the best of the largely unheard music that *Razorcake* champions. It's music that's rarely, if ever, played on any terrestrial or space radio. It's music that took a hit when brick-and-mortar, independent record stores shuttered. It's music that's never been on a major motion picture soundtrack or in a tween boner comedy.

I have blue collar music aspirations. It's my belief that America would be stronger if those who spend their lives creating art—who put in the decade-long hours, building the foundation for other artists to eventually stand and then leap from—be paid living wages. Nothing more than pay that covers obligations and promotes sustainability. Without us—the tiny labels, bands, venues, record stores, zines, promoters, websites, fans, recording places—music's *fuuuucked*.

Music's already largely fucked. But let's not get overdramatic.

Music that gets ignored, shunned, dismissed, marginalized, and isn't genre-convenient? It happened in the early '80s with underdogs such as the Minutemen, Big Boys, The Brat, and the Wipers.

It's happening again now in plain earshot.

Everyone can exhibit the worst type of "equal" when their electronic communication devices hold a charge. It may be that this ultra-convenience is helping wash great music aside. There's no bottom to people's laziness and sense of entitlement. If something becomes free, people want it cut up into tiny pieces and placed in their ears. ("You owe it to me to give me your music for free and I want updates and automatic downloads. Then it's my right to tell you how you suck on a message board or social media site.") It's super-heated consumption vs. toiling-for-next-to-nothing production.

Perhaps I'm talking pioneer speak or giving you information as relevant as instructions to a raver on how to shoe a horse. If you hear music you like—in an independent distro, store, or direct from the artist—play it. Give it a shot. If you like it, buy it. The rewards are manifold.

Independent ears. That's all I'm angling for.

Part of me wants to keep my favorites like Ben Cook a well-kept secret. I could keep his songs in my own personal storm shelter and tell the rest of the world to suck it. Part of me is tired of recommending music that isn't part of a marketing plan. I mean, what's the point?

I rarely take joy in saying, "I told you so."

—Todd Taylor

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ISSUE #64

August 1st, 2011

ISSUE #65

October 1st, 2011

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Cover design | Kevin Carle
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"Cuz we got our own comet and it's fueled by vomit/ When we fly past the earth we flick a booger on it."

—Mean Jeans, "Space Trash"

Is it crass to say, "That's a lot of fuckin'." Probably. Babies ahoy! To the left are four fruits-of-the-loins of *Razorcake* contributors and long-time friends. Congratulations to Rainer and Emma Fronz on tying the knot.

THANK YOU: So good you're gonna have to clamp your hands over your ears so your brain doesn't explode thanks to Kevin Carle and Danielle Nemet for the Ben Cook cover design and photo; Turtle of Capitalism tour guide thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Everybody lies, even mumbling cartoon characters, thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Jim's column; "No cat selling" deciphered thanks to Marcos for his illo. in Nardwuar's column; Bobble-bobble hey! thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Norb's column; It's the Lou Ferrigno, "You won't like me when I'm angry" version of the Rhythm Chicken thanks to Lubrano for his illo.; Christ mellowin' down to Slayer?—sign me up—thanks to Ryan Horky for his illo. in Dale's column; Hit the Ground Stumbling high fives to Nate Gangelhoff for his guest column and Boba Fett belly-shirt midriff thanks to Bill Pinkel for illo.; A cultural exchange between Roctober and *Razorcake* thanks to Joe Losurdo, Chris Tillman, and Jake Austin for the Tutu & The Pirates interview text, intro, and pictures; Exercise with Zsa Zsa, learn to clean mirrors at McDonald's, get yelled at by a dude in an American flag Speedo thanks to Billups Allen for the Found Footage Festival interview and screen grabs; It woulda just been a bunch of words without Danielle Nemet, Ivy Lovell, and Alexa Laniak's terrific photos of Ben Cook. Thanks; If you're looking for a TSOL fluff piece, you're gonna be buuummed thanks to Julia Smut, Rick Bain, and Keith Rosson for the Jack Grisham interview, photos, and layout; Think of these reviews as seeds. Hundreds and hundreds of seeds. Some of these artists will grow into mighty oaks. Some will never sprout ever again. And we review these seeds with 48,475 words this rotation. Thanks to the following for their record, book, video, and zine reviews: Sal Lucci, Keith Rosson, Kurt Morris, Ty Stranglehold, Ryan Horky, Ian Wise, Sean Koeppenick, Mark Twistworthy, Vincent, Garrett Barnwell, Billups Allen, Aphid Peewit, Art Ettinger, Matt Average, Donoftheinfantkid, The Lord Kveldulfr, Kristen K., Bryan Static, Jimmy Alvarado, Joe Evans III, CT Terry, Juan Espinosa, Mike Frame, Speedway Randy, Jake Shut, Paul J. Comeau, Lauren Trout, MP Johnson, Dave Williams, Craven Rock, Ryan Leach, Norb, Designated Dale, Jeff Proctor, Chris Mason, Andy Conway, Steve Hart, Katie Dunne, Dave Brainwreck, Steve Larder, and Nighthawk; The following people volunteered their time to keep this whole enterprise a-spinnin' in the last two months: Kari Hamanaka, Josh Rosa, Candice Tobin, Matt Braun, Joshua Ian Robles, Toby Tober, Matt Average, Megan Pants, Tatiana Bliss, Chris Baxter, Mary-Clare Stevens, Joe Dana, Ever Velazquez, Aaron Kovacs, Juan Espinoza, Samantha Beerhouse, George Lopez, Marcos Siref, Adrian Salas, John Barlog, Jeff Proctor, and Chris Devlin.

Jack Grisham.
School photo.



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RAZORCAKE

Issue #63 Aug. / Sept. 2011

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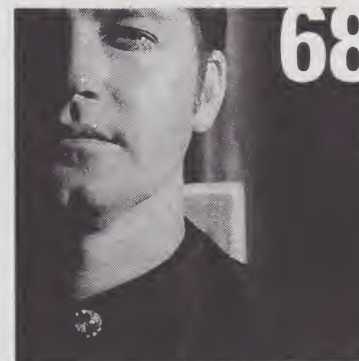
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"However, while the pot inserted a false note of significance into everything, and made any last scrap of initiative curl up and atrophy, it was still fun to smoke." —Nate Gangelhoff, *Hit the Ground Stumbling*



This issue of *Razorcake* is made possible in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs.



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"Art is so much better when you actually look at it."

DOWNTOWN SAFARI

A group of senior citizens out on safari descend on the downtown post office. They wear wide brim hats—the same kind Curious George's keeper wore—and huddle together close. One member of the group is clearly the guide. I can tell because he wears a vest and speaks with authority. He points out the post office mural, which was painted in 1936 by a local artist named Gordon Grant. The ceiling of the post office is about sixteen feet high, and the mural takes up the seven feet of wall from the ceiling down. It shows workers engaged in the various industries that drove the economy of this area back in the thirties: they farm; they pack oranges; they work on oil rigs; they operate machines in factories; they load trucks. "Notice," the tour guide says, "that all the faces of the workers are exactly the same."

I look up at the mural. What the tour guide says is true if you discount the fact that most of the faces have different noses, different chins, and different hairlines. The hues of their skin also vary. The faces do seem to conform to the artist's style. The eyes and mouths look pretty similar.

The tour guide adds, "And they're all looking down." This again is true if you discount the fact that several of them are looking up.

Perhaps because I've spent so much time looking at this mural, I start to really pay attention to the tour guide. I turn my gaze from the mural and to the guide. I notice that all the faces of the senior citizens on safari are not the same. While they do wear big hats that protect them from the sun, their faces differ. Some show that loose elasticity of someone pushing — or perhaps even beyond — eighty. Some stare intently at the mural. Some don't regard the mural at all, instead checking out the people in line or the homeless dude camping by the front door. The tour guide doesn't seem to be looking at the painting. His eyes focus inwardly, on a memorized passage about a mural that he doesn't bother to glance up and see at all. He has a thin, gray beard, slumped shoulders, arched back, and a round belly. If a cartoonist turned him into a character, the tour guide would likely morph into a tortoise.

He says, "Most of all, you'll notice that the workers all seem unhappy. This is because the artist, Gordon Grant, was a communist.

So, all the workers are communists. That's why they're so unhappy."

This makes me want to leave the line and ask the guide a few questions. First, if an artist is a communist, does that mean that everyone he paints becomes a communist, too? When Diego Rivera painted Mussolini, a Klansman, and the Pope in one of his murals, did Mussolini, the Klan, and the Pope all become communist? And what about being communists would make the workers unhappy? My understanding of communism—which comes from having actually read *The Communist Manifesto*—suggests that, under a communist regime, the workers would share equally in the wealth produced by their labor. Wouldn't that make them happier than the real farm workers of the thirties who were divorced from the wealth of their production, frequently beaten or arrested or starved out for attempting to organize, and paid wages that barely allowed them to feed themselves or weren't enough for them to feed themselves?

I don't walk over to the tour guide to ask him any of these questions. I just keep listening.

"And how did the town react?" the tour guide asks himself. "Well, this was a Republican town. They were not pleased at all with this socialist painting."

Again, I want to ask questions. What makes a town Republican? Was there some halcyon past when entire towns agreed on a political standpoint? It seems to me that most people don't wholly endorse one party or another, but pick and choose based on specific issues and candidates and their limited choices in elections. Was that not the case in the thirties? And what did it mean to be a Republican in the thirties? Did the town stand behind Hoover even though his policies were part of the reason the nation was flung into the Great Depression? Did they stand behind him despite the fact that he called upon MacArthur to violently suppress World War I veterans who marched on the White House looking for pay they'd been promised but never received?

And was Grant a communist or a socialist? I know that communism is a socialist platform in the same way that a square is also a rectangle. Just as not all rectangles are squares, not all socialists are communists. The terms are not interchangeable. Communism has, as one

of its principle tenets, the abolition of private property. Socialism is simply a community or government project that seeks to enrich the community without turning a profit. The examples of socialism we could see on this safari, for example, are the post office that we're standing in, the street that runs in front of it, the park across the street from it, and the city-funded tour the tour guide is leading. So, when the community railed against socialism, did they rail against the post office itself? Did they rail against the public road that led to the post office? What was their united opposition?

The tour guide chuckles as he describes the sad descent of the artist who ended up committing suicide. When he's done, he leads the safari out of the post office and onto further points of interest.

My poor wife has to hear me ramble about everything wrong with that tour guide's thirty-second presentation.

Part of what chaps my ass about this tour guide's presentation is his total dismissal of the painting. I love that painting. I live downtown. I run the mail order of a non-profit book publisher, so I spend a lot of time mailing books at that post office. A lot of that time is spent standing in line, which makes sense. I live in a heavily-populated region of an overpopulated world. In a lot of cases, more than one member of the population wants to do the same thing at the same time, in the same place. So we have to wait for others sometimes. It's no big deal. Still, I greatly appreciate Grant's mural at the post office. It's a respite from all the advertising clutter that surrounds me. Instead, here's a piece of art that gives my thoughts a field to roam. I like that the art matches the landscape of my life. I love that it focuses on workers—both men and women—in their daily activities. I wish I lived in a society that supported more of this art. I wish our public spaces would offer more things like Grant's mural and fewer things like billboards.

I also love that, if you had the time to stare for hours at this mural, you'd probably come up with different ideas about it than I do. We could talk about our different interpretations. All that I ask is that, unlike the tour guide, you actually look up at the painting before generating your ideas. Art is so much better when you actually look at it.



SOCIALISM

IS SIMPLY A COMMUNITY OR GOVERNMENT PROJECT THAT SEEKS TO ENRICH THE COMMUNITY WITHOUT TURNING A PROFIT.

BRAD BESHAW

The other thing that bugged me about the tour guide was how much his presentation mirrors our cultural discourse. He works exactly the way much of our media works. In short, you have someone who knows very little about the issues he's presenting, has almost no concern with whether the information has any bearing in fact, uses language that he does not have control over, discusses an issue devoid of the context surrounding the issue, and delivers the information in a way that is needlessly simplistic. And, like the rest of the safari, we spend too little time asking questions about the information. Instead, we tend to either accept it because it's easier to accept the opinions of others than to do the research necessary to form our own opinions, or we get frustrated that so much of our information is delivered by dubious presenters like the tour guide, so we largely tune out. In both cases, we lose opportunities to understand our world better. It's a shame.

After leaving the post office, my wife and I head into downtown. The safari is now at the corner of Chestnut and Main. The tour

guide points at the old downtown theater building. He's too far away for me to hear what he's saying, which is lucky for my wife, because that means she won't have to hear my rebuttal. Our former neighbor Shirley is on a collision course with the group. Shirley lived in the section eight housing that was next to the first apartment my wife and I shared here. She's crazy. She has some sort of dissociative disorder. Some days, we could hear Shirley screaming at her empty apartment, using the voice of an angry older male. Sometimes, she would pace up and down the stairs, talking to herself in another voice. Sometimes, she sat on the steps and talked like a very young girl. We lived next to Shirley long enough for me to recognize five or six distinct voices she used. One of those voices was that of sane Shirley. I'd frequently chat with sane Shirley. Nothing too specific. Just the typical neighbor chat: stuff about the weather or day-to-day activities. One time, she baked me cookies.

Shirley approaches the safari. It's clear she's out of it. I can tell by the way she's charging toward the group like she might

sack the tour guide. My wife and I get closer. Shirley charges past the group then stops to wait for the traffic light. The group heads east toward the library. My wife and I cross Main. Shirley doesn't recognize us. She doesn't even react to me when I wave to her. Instead, she cocks her hips and waves her hand at the traffic light with the type of flourish a model uses at a car show. She talks about the traffic light. I can't make out what she's saying, but I recognize her teenage girl voice.

We end up following Shirley for a couple of blocks. She keeps up her routine, flourishing her hand at points of interest downtown in her own dissociative mimicry of the tour guide. She points out benches, an ATM machine, an Italian restaurant, a white lady in yoga pants who's walking a dog. I can't make out a word Shirley is saying. Still, I think she's so much better at this than the tour guide.

—Sean Carswell



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"The body forgets, but the brain remembers"

The Boundarylands

Can a dream change your life?

Scores of artists, musicians, scientists, and entrepreneurs through the ages have had dreams that led to incredible breakthroughs. The idea for Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* came to her in a dream. The same goes for the plot for Stephen King's *Misery* and the melody for Paul McCarthy's "Yesterday."

Dreams are powerful. They feel real but aren't. This "almostness" can leave us breathless with desire or paralyzed with fear. Dreams mimic our experiences, but they also diverge from them in astonishing ways. Knowing where the difference lies is key to understanding them, but this knowledge is often elusive. Dreams almost always leave us with more questions than answers. The Romantic poet Lord Byron called dreams

*A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence*

I remember when I was a kid I had a dream about a girl in my school named Karen. In my dream, we were in love with each other, whatever that means to a ten-year-old. But when I woke up I was still in love. I ached. I yearned. I was absolutely crazy about Karen.

It was toward the end of summer vacation, so I hadn't seen Karen for weeks and weeks and wouldn't see her for a few more. My infatuation made me freakish and strange. I was actually excited about the end of summer vacation. I couldn't wait for school to start, just so I could see Karen and commence our courtship. I didn't really have a plan. I figured I'd look her in the eyes and she'd look in mine and we'd be swept off our feet together. It didn't work out that way. The first day of school came around and Karen paid no attention to me. I was crushed.

What does a ten-year-old know about love? More than you think. I'd been studying the phenomenon all my life: at home, in the neighborhood, on TV. The problem wasn't that my love wasn't real, but that we didn't dream the same dream. A boundary divided us. I figured out that without the dream, I wouldn't have been interested in her. But it was still devastating.

I didn't give up on my dreams that easily. I was a worrier, the kind of kid who stayed up late at night worrying about overdue library books and how I was going to pay the fines.

I worried about my late fees the way some adults worry about defaulting on their student loans or not being able to pay their mortgage. I was wound just a bit too tightly.

One night I dreamt I had an adventure with Popeye the Sailor. I don't remember the adventure per se only that it was successful. At the end of the dream Popeye handed me a sack of loot, an actual bag of money with a dollar sign on it, just like in the cartoons. I was overjoyed. I could finally pay off my overdue library books!

This time I wasn't so easily fooled. The cold light of reason crept across the boundary and I told Popeye I knew that I couldn't take the money with me because this was "just a dream."

But Popeye had a solution. "Put the money under yer pillow so it will be there when you wake up!"

The logic was irrefutable. What better way to pass the riches of my dreams into the real world? I did as Popeye instructed and crawled into bed. When I woke up the next morning, I yanked the pillow off my bed and discovered... nothing.

That this was one of the most disappointing moments of my youth speaks to a happy, trauma-free childhood. I was still absolutely destroyed. Popeye lied to me. It takes a while to get over something like that.

(For you thrift store psychologists out there: my father was a naval officer. Then, many years later, I, too, would join the Navy. We both love spinach. Make of it what you will.)

I suspect everyone has had dreams like this: visions that blur the boundaries between the real and the not real. Eventually we come to understand that the information in our dreams is ridiculous, unreliable, or just plain scary. We learn to block it out, to dismiss it as "just a dream." Johannes Kepler, the seventeenth century astronomer and mathematician, developed ideas that were so radical that he disguised them as a work of fiction to avoid persecution by the church. The title of the work? "Somnium" or "The Dream." For only a crackpot would write a book about their dreams.

When we see dreams in books and movies we view them as a kind of psychological cheat, a lazy writer making sure we don't miss the message. We generally don't reflect on our dreams or talk about them with our coworkers. In fact, we shun those who read

too much into their dreams. Is there anything less interesting than other people's dreams?

Dreams aren't trustworthy. Dreams lie. They also show us the way.

I'm particularly drawn to the discoveries that scientists made as a result of their dreams. It's easy for a songwriter or novelist to say their work came from a dream because, awake or asleep, creativity is mysterious. Some people have a process, some wait for inspiration, and others go about their business and hope the ideas are there when they need them like ink flowing from a pen. None of these artists know where their ideas come from.

Scientists and mathematicians are problem solvers. They have a methodology. They identify a problem and document all the ways an experiment does or does not bring about a solution. That's why I'm fascinated by examples of leaps and bounds made by dreamers who are presented with solutions in their sleep.

We have dreams to thank for the invention of the sewing machine, discovery of planets, breakthroughs in cell biology, and a million other patents and inventions. It's information that crossed over from the not-real and made real by the ingenuity and elbow grease of their dreamers.

So when is a dream more than a dream?

Sometimes I dream that I'm drunk or doing drugs. These dreams are a lot of fun, but they can be stressful, too. After being clean and sober for two-and-a-half years, it's alarming to feel cocaine's manic intensity or alcohol's sloppy disorientation. The body forgets, but the brain remembers exactly what it feels like to be under the influence, the same way it remembers what it feels like to fight, fuck, or flee in terror.

But what about the things our brains can't possibly know, like what it feels like to fly over a rain forest? Or pilot a flying saucer? Or destroy a zombie with ninja moves? What do we do with these dreams that possess knowledge that we can't possibly have?

Earlier this spring I dreamt about my friend JJ who died in 2009 from an intentional overdose. I was at a conference in Illinois and sleeping in a strange bed, which often triggers vivid dreams. I'd been out late the night before with colleagues and woke early to get some work done. I took a nap around mid-morning and that's when JJ came to me.



Popeye lied to me.

It takes a while to get over something like that.

We were sitting across from each other at a picnic table. JJ looked like he always did. Black t-shirt, jeans, slicked back hair. He said he had a present for me. There was a bag on the table and in the bag was a white box and inside the box was an army green T-shirt with a design that featured a map made out of all the board games I'd loved as a kid: Candy Land and Chutes and Ladders, Monopoly and Stratego, Life and Risk. It was like looking at an atlas of my childhood.

"There's more," JJ said. I kept looking and there were three tank tops for my wife Nuvia. "Hey," I jokingly complained, "how come Nuvia gets three T-shirts and I only get one?" JJ leaned across the table and said, "They were three for ten bucks." And then he laughed, a rich exuberant sound that I'd give anything to hear again.

There was something else in the box, a half-empty pint bottle of tequila. The bottle had a strange shape, like a spike or a knife. The bottle worried me, but before I could say anything, JJ said, "That's not for you." He put the bottle in his pocket and told me he loved me. That's all I remember.

JJ never knew me sober. A few weeks before he died, he called me on the phone, and when I didn't pick up, he left a message. "Let's go out and have a few or a few too many. You never know." I never saw him again.

While JJ's not the reason I quit drinking and drugging, I dedicate my sobriety to him. It's my way of making sense of his death for how can his suicide be senseless if his memory is keeping me sober?

JJ can't possibly know this, can he? My dreams are blurring the boundaries again and taking advantage of my gullibility, right?

The answer doesn't matter. The dream is not the rough draft for a story or book. It's not material that cries out to be crafted into a poem or an essay like this one. No, the dream represents a solution that can be applied to the problem: "How to stop feeling guilty about JJ."

I'm finally thinking like a scientist. What I'm beginning to understand is that in all the ways that matter, dreams are just like life. Life is an experiment that doesn't require a solution. All that matters is that you are loved because in the end you never know.

—Jim Ruland



**“Rebrand
this
shithole.”**

Abusive Wolves, the Wrath of God, and a Special Razorcake Election!

Greetings readers of the written word! I hope this issue finds you tornado-free!

I'm writing this a week after a twister hit my fair city, leveling about twenty-five homes in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods—a clear sign of God's wrath against poor people, or perhaps God's wrath against our country for forcing people into poverty in the first place. To quote the Good Book, “And so, the Lord sent his twisters to destroy the evidence of a minimum wage roughly equivalent to the current retail price of a seven-inch.”) Lo, it came to pass!

If I was annoying, I would say, “Yes, but compared to other atrocities in the world, we should consider ourselves lucky.” This would set the stage for an epic battle to win the trophy for Worst Life Ever! A true race to the bottom, pitting those who are in prison unjustly against those who are in prison unjustly *and* living with a nagging pain from an old ankle injury! Yes, things can always be worse!

Of course, when considering the Worst Life Ever award, there would be so many different

factors to consider. Would it be worse to be raised by wolves or raised by abusive parents? The wolves might've been nice, but it's going to be pretty hard to get used to civilian life once you've been yanked from your wolf den. If your parents were abusive, depending on the severity of the abuse, you could recover and live a normal life (and you wouldn't have to learn a “human” language and give up howling and barking). That might edge you ahead by a few points, but in a truly global competition, that alone is not going to cut it. Plus, there's a range of fucked-up-ness in any given situation. What if you lived in an abusive wolf family?

Yes, the challenges of this contest seem impossible to overcome, perhaps because they are impossible to overcome. But everyone loves a contest (or so I've determined in the last fifteen minutes), so I decided to approach this from a slightly different angle. Let's discard individual competitors and replace them with entire nations. Yes, let's try to determine what country is the WORST to live in! (Insert obvious caveats here.)

I present to you Maddy Tight Pant's Candidates for the *Worst Country in Which to Reside in the Current Year!*

From these candidates, it will be your responsibility to select the winner! No write-in candidates allowed! The reason? Theoretically, almost any country could make this list, so we need to confine our ignorance to a few select countries intended to be more or less representative of certain types of shitty nations. Yes, we are dumb, so we have to plan for that! See the end of the ballot for voting details.

And so, in random order, here we go!

Moldova!

Moldova was recently declared the “saddest country in Europe” based on questions that resemble a depression screening. Most of its citizens don't want to live there—one-third live illegally in other countries. Moldova is also home to a semi-independent autonomous zone called Transnistria—a Soviet-styled drug smuggling tunnel operated solely by one man known as The Sheriff! If you try to take a picture of the area, say, while you were stopped in a train station, expect to be noticed and taken in for a photo critique/interrogation, or so my sister, who lived there for a few months, tells me. The head of Transnistria has vowed to leave if it ever becomes a democracy. Not convinced yet? Here's one more fun fact: An average Moldovan street is home to unemployed people of various ages trying (and failing) to sell empty jars. A vibrant economy!

North Korea!

This one was a shoo-in for a nomination for all of the obvious reasons (totally creepy leader, no basic human rights, ugly concrete Communist capital city without the ugly, concrete charm of Moscow, mass starvation). But before you make a hasty decision, allow me to complicate the matter slightly based on actual research! If you're a studious voter, I recommend that you read the book *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* by a journalist named Barbara Demick. She tells the stories of a bunch of North Koreans who left the country illegally.





An epic battle to win the trophy for Worst Life Ever!

She points out that it's not that hard to flee into China, and North Korea's apparently the perfect place for teenagers to sneak out at night because the electricity gets turned off completely, leaving the entire nation pitch black in a way that most of us will never experience. One might wonder if this country offers an excellent opportunity to cultivate a punk rock hatred of authority. But then one remembers the prisons and exile camps in the middle of nowhere. A complicated choice!

Somalia!

A warlord's paradise! A country so bad, you can't even be deported back to it! You've got an uncertain political system, roving violent gangs (as opposed to stationary, non-violent gangs), and more! On the plus side, you've got pirates, but they aren't the cool pirates portrayed in books such as Pippi (Longstocking) in the South Seas! No, these are the kidnapping and ransom-taking breed of pirates, but apparently they sometimes bribe entire towns that live along the coasts, so this might not be the worst thing if you're okay with a little corruption. And in this situation, why wouldn't you be?

Congo!

Let's here it for the country that brought us the most deadly war since World War II, and it's more or less still happening! If you last glanced at a map in high school, and you graduated around the time the Queers released *Don't Back Down*, you might know this country as Zaire. I can only assume based on my limited (read: evidence-free) research that the name change was a desperate attempt to rebrand this shithole. Congo is the second poorest country in the world, per person, but it has a crazy amount of minerals worth tons of money, which has to be tough to deal with

for your average citizen. If you lived here, you might be a slave, or you might be raped, or both. This one's going to be tough to beat. On the plus side, it's home to jungles with more than 100,000 gorillas, which is pretty cool in a Planet Earth kind of way, although perhaps not in a gorilla-attacking-me-in-my-backyard kind of way.

Burma!

Ah, Burma, a country whose atrocities keep the Democracy Now! radio show in business! Sure, there's child labor, human trafficking, no free speech, mass killings, and all of the usual things one might expect from this anti-Amy Goodman nation! But why reference Ms. Goodman when you can reference Sylvester Stallone! America's favorite intellectual/movie star was in Burma to film *John Rambo*, the fourth Rambo movie. Apparently, Burma is SO bad that not even Rambo can handle it! "This is a hellhole beyond your wildest dreams," he told the media upon his return. He said elephants had their legs blown off and Buddhist monks were killed and tossed into the river. Of course, you have to decide if you trust the opinion of a man who seems to have neglected to Google Burma before deciding to shoot a film there.

The Maldives!

Existential alert! Is there a worse country to live in than one that's rapidly sinking into the ocean? Members of this tiny, tiny nation in the middle of the Indian Ocean have been pleading with the U.N. to do more to fight climate change so that the country doesn't disappear, but without much luck. Imagine if the U.S. was losing a few hundred miles every year. People would freak out, and Gilman Street would become a relic sitting on the bottom of the

ocean, an attraction for scavengers and National Geographic producers!

On the plus side, the Maldives seems like one of the most beautiful places to live, and most people there appear to be making a crazy amount of money from the tourism industry. (I once contemplated trying to go there, but quickly realized that it might be the most expensive place in the world to visit. You could spend thousands of dollars a night just to stay there, and given the ever-diminishing size of the country, I'm guessing there's not a lot of extra space for free-loading punk rock types!) Does the Maldives get bonus negative points for being a country that's cool enough to make us upset if it disappears?

America U.S.A.!

What kind of punk rock columnist would I be if I denied you the right to hate your own country above all others? This might be a stretch, but anarchists/lapsed Against Me! fans, this entry is for you! Perhaps the mere fact of living in the United States makes us all war criminals, which is a pretty bad thing to be. Sure, Moldova is bad, but maybe it's worse to be hated by the whole world? I doubt it, but I'm giving you the option! I will say that when I lived in France, I tried to pass as Canadian whenever possible, which was most of the time.

How to vote! Please email your vote to: worstcountryexistingtoday@gmail.com. Yes, that is an actual email address, created for the purposes of this contest. The winner will be announced in the next issue of *Razorcake*—AND I'll send an official certificate to the winning nation! Punk rock!

—Maddy



THE TERRORISTS WIN



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S/T LP

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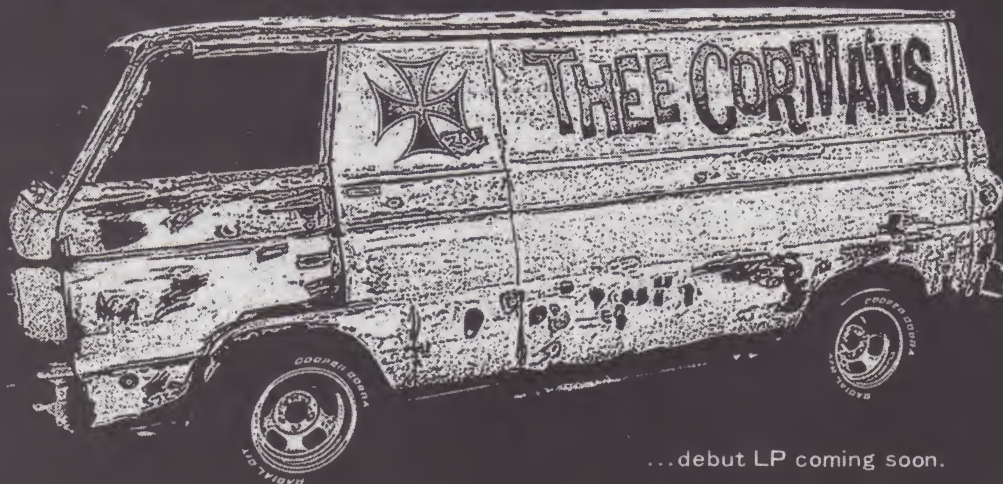
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MY STUPID LIFE

BY MITCH CLEM
WATERCOLORS BY NATION OF AMANDA

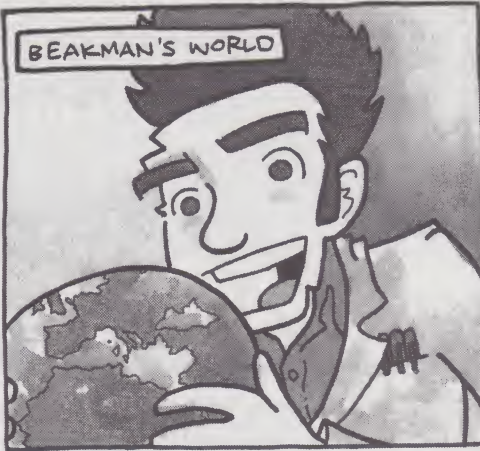
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LEGITIMATE COMEDY TODAY,
HERE'S JUST A
LIST OF
THINGS FROM
THE 90s:



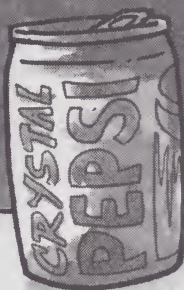
FANNY PACKS



BEAKMAN'S WORLD



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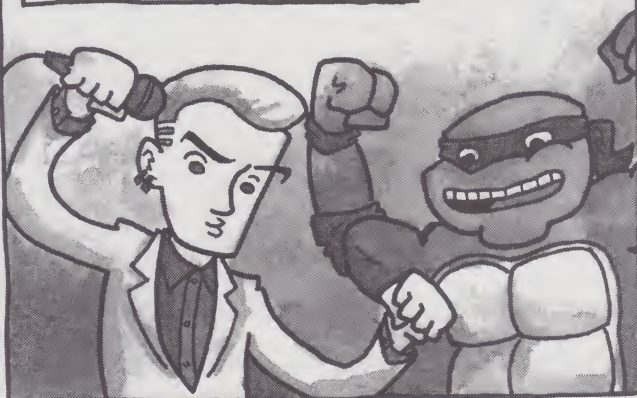


MR. T ATE MY BALLS



GIMME
THEM BALLS
FOOL!

"GO NINJA, GO NINJA, GO!"



LABEL SAMPLER CD's



FUCK. THAT'S PART
OF A WORLD I
ACTUALLY MISS...

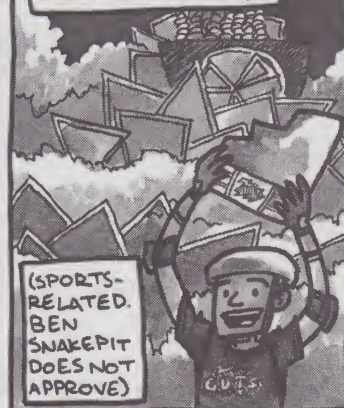


RUDE DOG



YO DUDES,
GET RUDE!

THE AGGRO CRAG



THE SANDLOT



FOR...

...EV...

...ER

AAAND LAST, BUT
NOT LEAST...



POGS



YOU'RE
WELCOME.



THE
END

(APOLOGIES TO ANYONE BORN BEFORE 1990 OR AFTER 1985. MAYBE NEXT TIME!)

DOO
DOOLA
DOO
DOO...

DOO
DOO!

WHO ARE YOU?

"I fucks with
you homie!
Believe it."

Nardwuar vs. Lil Wayne

The Human Serviette

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Lil Wayne: Young black motherfucker named Lil Wayne from Hollygrove, U.S.A.

Nardwuar: Lil Wayne, welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Lil Wayne: Pleasure.

Nardwuar: Lil Wayne, you're in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Vancouver's part of the Northwest; you know, Portland and Seattle, Washington. I wanted to bring you a little gift here. [Nardwuar hands Lil Wayne a poster.] If you want to open this up, it's a little gift from an exhibition that's happening and what is this from, Lil Wayne?

Lil Wayne: Oh, it's from Nirvana. *Taking Punk to the Masses*. Believe that's "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Shout out to my man Kurt Cobain.

Nardwuar: Well, I got more than that for you, Lil Wayne. I got this book for you right here. [Nardwuar hands Lil Wayne a book] *Nirvana: Taking Punk...*

Lil Wayne: *To the Masses. From Nowhere to Nevermind*.

Nardwuar: All filled with amazing stuff about Nirvana and the bands that inspired Nirvana. Check it out.

Lil Wayne: It even has the lyrics.

Nardwuar: Lyrics and check this out; some Kurt Cobain artwork right here. [Nardwuar points to artwork]

Lil Wayne: This is like a book I got before, a Jimi Hendrix book. It actually has Jimi Hendrix's art and it has his lyrics in it as well. I collect these type of things, so this is a good thing right here.

Nardwuar: When did you first get into Nirvana?

Lil Wayne: When I was young they used to have a television station called The Box and you used to call the station and order a video and "Smells Like Teen Spirit" used to always be on and you had no choice but to get into it from there. And that was in like '93... '92... I want to say. I don't even know.

Nardwuar: Now, I was wondering, was that around the same time Lil Wayne, that you were into Pimp Daddy? [Nardwuar hands Lil Wayne a cassette.]

Lil Wayne: Oh shit.

Nardwuar: What can you tell the people about Pimp Daddy?

Lil Wayne: Pimp Daddy was a Cash Money artist and he used to have this song called

"Gots to Be Real." It was a real big song. Now this guy, Pimp Daddy, was such a classic in New Orleans and such a hit that my actual first rap name was...

Nardwuar: Shrimp Daddy?

Lil Wayne: Shrimp Daddy. And I named myself that because I was short, so I took the "Shrimp" and I wanted to be like this guy right here, Pimp Daddy.

Nardwuar: And I noticed that Lil Slim is on there as well.

Lil Wayne: Yeah, Lil Slim is on here. Lil Slim is the artist who got me my record deal with Cash Money Records.

Nardwuar: So Lil Wayne, way back then, when you want to buy a cassette, you go to Odyssey Records. What was Odyssey Records?

Lil Wayne: You go to Odyssey Records right in the Carrollton Shopping Center. On a nice day you find DJ Khaled in there, DJing and selling records.

Nardwuar: Did you do some in-stores there as well, Lil Wayne?

Lil Wayne: I actually did. I did a whole bunch of autograph signings there. I probably even performed there before. I did everything at Odyssey. Odyssey played a major part in Cash Money's upbringing.

Nardwuar: Now we're here in the 604, but I'm going to bring it back to the 504, Lil Wayne. I have a New Orleans gift for you. [Nardwuar hands Wayne a record.] This is from King Lee And Quintron. And it's called *Tire Shop*, this particular record. Quintron is an amazing keyboardist from New Orleans. And it's about the tire shop on St. Claude Avenue, the only tire shop in the ninth ward that stayed open during Katrina.

Lil Wayne: Okay, which is important because people needed things like that.

Nardwuar: And what I wanted to point out was, really interesting on this, is a little sign. What do you see on the little sign?

Lil Wayne: [Looking at the record.] It says, "No loitering, no crack selling, no cat selling, the facts." [laughs] That's wild.

Nardwuar: And I was wondering, what is "no cat selling"?

Lil Wayne: That's pussy. Where I'm from.

Nardwuar: So the tire shop would be...?

Lil Wayne: The tire shop would not be allowing you to sell pussy, nor crack, no loitering. You couldn't hang out. And at the bottom of that it says "the facts." That's the facts and if you look

hard, it says NOPD and that means the police was backed up behind that.

Nardwuar: So they would call the police if there was a problem; I think that's what they were saying.

Lil Wayne: Mr. Samuel will be called. I'm guessing either Mr. Samuel ran the tire shop or he's an NOPD. One or the other.

Nardwuar: That's a gift for you to check out. Quintron and King Lee. And also wondering, Lil Wayne, I know a little about Mannie Fresh, but what about Gregory D? [Nardwuar hands Lil Wayne a record.]

Lil Wayne: Oh shit. Gregory D. Gregory D was like New Orleans' first real big hip-hop artist. He had this song called "Buck Jump Time." Lemme see if it's on here.

Nardwuar: No, it's not on that one.

Lil Wayne: Lemme see if he got something on here that we did know that was cool.

Nardwuar: "The Throwdown," I think, was pretty cool.

Lil Wayne: "The Throwdown" was big, but I think it was "Monster Boogie" and "Bust Down"? But yeah, like I said, Gregory D and Mannie Fresh—Mannie Fresh was the DJ. Gregory D was the rapper and like I said, they were New Orleans' first real hip-hop group. As you can see [looking at the back of the record], they got the gold chains on, he got a stopwatch around his neck, he got a medallion, got the little nylon suits on. Fresh got on a Nike suit, looking real crazy back there.

Nardwuar: Is that the beginning of bling? Do you think that's the first instance of bling on a record, Lil Wayne?

Lil Wayne: No, I would give that to somebody like Big Daddy Kane, Kool Moe Dee, somebody like Slick Rick or something. They started that.

Nardwuar: Lil Wayne, you did this song "Triggaman" with Curren\$. (<http://youtu.be/VY3IOq4uzpc>) And what I was wondering about that, the "Triggaman" beat. What can you tell the people about the importance about the "Triggaman" beat by The Showboys, to New Orleans? [Nardwuar hands Lil Wayne a record.]

Lil Wayne: That's "Drag Rap." This beat right here. I'm trying to find a proper word. It's like the foundation of New Orleans bounce music. This song, it's called "Drag Rap." In New Orleans we call it "Trigger



MARCOS SIREF

I don't eat alligator. I don't eat none of the shit that natural, normal people don't eat.

Man" because he says "trigger man" like once or twice in the song, so we just that was the name of the song. But, it originated from an old show they used to have called Dragnet. And they dubbed the music from the show and they made a song out of it.

This was in probably 1990 or something when this song popped off in New Orleans and I lie to you not, you can play this song in 1990, people will go bananas. You play this song right now in 2011 in New Orleans, people will go bananas. I don't know what it is about this song. I don't know what it is because I've actually been everywhere else and I asked them, "Do you have a song or something that just your state or your city hears and it just means everything for everyone?" They don't. This song right here is New Orleans. The Showboys, "Drag Rap." "Triggaman."

Nardwuar: I love the way you give a props to them, like you say "Showboys" when you do the track with Curren\$y. That's great. Right off the bat, props to The Showboys.

Lil Wayne: They was from New York, believe it or not. We took that song and we fell in love with it, man.

Nardwuar: Lil Wayne, what type of food do you like?

Lil Wayne: Pussy.

Nardwuar: Do you ever go to Parkway Bakery in New Orleans at all?

Lil Wayne: Never even heard of it.

Nardwuar: Because they have like, alligator po-boys. Ever had, like, alligator food at all?

Lil Wayne: Nah, I don't do that stuff. Even though I'm from the South, the country, or whatever you want to call it, I don't eat alligator. I don't eat none of the shit that natural, normal people don't eat. I don't fuck with that shit.

Nardwuar: Lil Wayne, what about food? Have you ever considered or been approached by the Rap Snacks company? Because here's some Rap Snacks. Miss Toi, a rapper, who was on the Up In Smoke tour, she has her own Rap Snacks and the Big Tymers had Rap Snacks chips, too. [Nardwuar hands Lil Wayne some Rap Snacks.]

Lil Wayne: They sure fuckin' did. [laughs] They sure did have them, man. And I actually know Miss Toi as well. [laughs] Shout out to Miss Toi, wherever she at right now. Yeah, Baby and them had their own chips. The Big Tymers chips. They really did. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Sour cream and dill.

Lil Wayne: I don't remember the flavor, but they had their own Rap Snacks. You're not lying, yes.

Nardwuar: What about yourself though, Lil Wayne, what would your flavor be if there had to be a flavor?

Lil Wayne: Honestly, I want to say we properly had our own flavor, like the Hot Boys, and I think it was Hot Chips.

Nardwuar: Lil Wayne, lastly, Drake helped set up this interview between you and me and I guess I was wondering, could you give out a little shout out, freestyle to Drake, for setting up this interview. He really went beyond the call of duty. He emailed a bunch of people. He faxed a bunch. You name it.

Lil Wayne: All right. Shout out to my man, Drake. Coming from your boy, Tune. Thanks for hooking me up with this interview with this crazy ass dude.

Nardwuar: Nardwuar The Human Serviette.

Lil Wayne: Yeah, whatever you just said.

Nardwuar: Well thanks so much, Lil Wayne. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Lil Wayne: Doot doo. [Laughs] I fucks with you homie! Believe it.

To hear and watch this interview hop over to nardwuar.com



POWER POP POLICE

REV. NØRB

**"WE ARE,
COLLECTIVELY,
FUCKED."**

JOEY IS A HEADBOBLER, BUT NØRBIE'S JUST A GEEK (("Sung to the tune of 'Suzy is a Headbanger'"))

So i'm at Jake's Pizza with Chixdiggitt and Kepi Ghoulie, watching them eat their weird half-garlic, half-pineapple pizzas. At one point in time, i would have fought hammer and tong—tooth and nail—beach and boulevard—against any jive turkey who might have had the misguided audacity to claim that Jake's pizza was not the finest 'za on the planet, but Jake sold Jake's to some un-Jake mortal a few years ago, and, at this sad point in our planet's history, Jake's isn't even the best pizza in Green Bay any more, let alone Planet Earth. *Hmpf. Tourists.* Anyway, our dinnertime conversation has already covered weighty topics like the lyrics to the Hamm's® Beer TV jingle, and, randomly, somebody mentions that there is now a Keith Morris® bobblehead for thus-inclined consumers to purchase. "There's also a Joey Shithead® bobblehead," i add. The table murmurs its rapt fascination with this fantastic amazing trivia fact. Meandering on with a conversational aimlessness, i continue my thought: "I wonder how long it'll be until..." At this, i realize what i am on the thorny precipice of saying, and cut myself off abruptly. To no avail; everyone at the table already knows what i was intending to say, and Kepi finishes my impudent thought for me: "...until we get OUR bobbleheads?" "Yeah," i admit, shifting slightly in my chair. I have reached the point of no return: I have, in front of God® and a table full of garlic-eating witnesses, just inquired as to why society has not bequeathed unto me my own Rev. Nørb® Bobblehead. Now, i have THOUGHT about why society has not bequeathed unto me my own Rev. Nørb® Bobblehead for a while now ((ever since the kid i babysit for and i passed a record store display window with a Milo Aukerman® bobblehead rotating around on a turntable, and he said "hey, it looks like you spinning around on a record player!"), which, indeed, it did, if you discount the complete and utter absence of an Antler Helmet, white leather jacket, and checkered spandex shorts)), i just never said it out loud before. Kepi shakes his head disdainfully, and hisses "pop punk is at the bottom of the barrel!" with the greatest amount of legitimate disgust i've ever heard him express. This is a good thing for him to say, as it deflects the culpability for Earth's complete and utter dearth of Chixdiggitt, Groovie Ghoulies, and Boris The Sprinkler

bobbleheads from our own possible shortcomings and lamenesses to some greater manner of social discrimination ((surely, SURELY out of our control!)) over which we can not reasonably be expected to exert significant influence, so let's just eat our weird half-black, half-green olive pizzas and be merry. It is a strange thing, to me, to publicly inquire as to why the fuck nobody made a bobblehead of me ((slash us)) yet: It seems bitchy and bratty and at least mildly egomaniacal and reeks of the sort of sense of "entitlement" that Republicans try so fervently to psychologically attach to the concept of our Social Security money, even though i've been paying money into Social Security since i was fifteen years old so it's MY FUCKING MONEY, and if i'm not entitled to MY FUCKING MONEY, who is, you FUCKS? I mean, obviously, punk rock is all about the DIY aspect of things ((stop me if i'm going too quickly for you here)), but you'd have to be a real fuckin' douchenozzle to make your own bobblehead of yourself, and what if you made like a thousand of these things and you hauled them all over the place and set up big pretty pyramids of them for sale at merch tables and nobody ever bought them, and then you had to keep marking down the price, and people still didn't buy them, and then you had to have your own bobblehead giveaway night at some show just to get rid of the damn things, and mostly people just played baseball with them out in the parking lot? Apart from impressing your family members at Christmas one year, you'd be screwed! *See, these are the things i worry about!* So, then, if punk rockers cannot reasonably be expected to make their own bobbleheads, our only real recourse is to somehow impress the bobblehead makers of the world with our inherent worthiness ((or, at bare minimum, our apparent profitability)), and, since our collective inherent worthiness is, according to Kepi, at the bottom of the barrel ((presumably shooting fish as some manner of pleasant diversion)), it then follows that vis-a-vis bobbleheads, WE ARE, COLLECTIVELY, FUCKED. *We will remain sans bobbleheads until the end of days! The bobbling of our heads shall be forever restricted to the tepid ministrations of our own real-life neck muscles!! Bobbleheadless horsemen on an all-night Vivarin® jag!!!* It's a dire thought indeed, this prospect of going

one's entire life without a frickin' bobblehead. AS OF 18:09 UTC (EST+5) JUN 05, 2011, THERE ARE 6,922,961,026 PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD, AND I CAN ONLY NAME A COUPLE THOUSAND OF THEM. Know why? That's right! *Because the other 6,922,959,026 of them don't have bobbleheads!* WE NEED BOBBLEHEADS, DAMMIT! To cement our legacy! To carry on our work when we've shuffled off this mortal coil! *To preserve our way of life for future generations!* I mean, it was different when they only had like the GG Allin® and the Tesco Vee® bobbleheads. That seemed sufficiently out there enough that it wasn't anything of which i felt deprived not to be a part. Once they got to the Keith Morris®, the Joey Shitheads®, the Milo Aukerman® of the world, well...a fella can't help but think "damn, where the hell do i sign up for this shit?", ya know? *Do I take a number? Is this like THIRTEEN TIME WORLD CHAMPION Green Bay Packer season tickets, where there's a 60,000-name waiting list? Who's a fella gotta talk to in this town to get all bobbleheaded up?* I mean, don't get me wrong, i know full well the score on where Chixdiggitt and Kepi Ghoulie and Rev. Nørb stand as compared to the Circle Jerks and DOA and the Descendents. Those bands are orders of magnitude more influential and well-known than our bands, and that is as it should be ((I assure you! The Descendents are one of my favorite bands of all time, my old band re-recorded the entire first Circle Jerks album as a tribute, and, when i was first startin' out in the rawk called punk, one of the guys i tried to sing like was Joey Shithead of DOA—so, yes, like everyone else, i am a fan of these guys)). So, yes—Keith Morris and Joey Shithead and Milo Aukerman are unquestionably huge influential figures in punk rock, and do indeed deserve to be enbobbleheaded—but, at the end of the day, they're just like two guys in gym shorts and one guy in a denim jacket. I'm sorry, but these fellows do not set the aesthetic bar particularly high ((sure, Milo has gym shorts AND nerd glasses. I will see Milo's nerd glasses and raise him an Antler Helmet, ya know?)). Sure, we're not as popular nor influential, but think of how much cooler our bobbleheads would be! KJ of Chixdiggitt always has his mike way low and stands in that ridiculously low-to-the-ground spread-



RYAN GELATIN

In front of God® and a table full of garlic-eating witnesses, just inquired as to why society has not bequeathed unto me my own Rev. Nørb® Bobblehead.

legged stance, think of how cool it would be to have a bobblehead that's like six inches wide and five inches high ((Mark's bobblehead is on hiatus in lieu of a hand sanitizer dispenser))! Kepi's bobblehead could have four extra heads, so whenever you walked past your knick-knack shelf, you could see it and spontaneously bust out into a chorus of "THE BOBBLE WITH FIVE HEADS ((FIVE HEADS!!! FIVE HEADS!!!))", amusing yourself to no end! As for my own bobblehead, I would go with a tasteful outfit consisting of my Sacred Mystic Antler Helmet ((for those who came in late, a motorcycle helmet with a pair of deer antlers bolted to the sides, and "GEEK" in huge letters across the front", a pair of "Back To The Future®" sunglasses duct taped over my Milo nerd glasses, my white leather jacket, my checkered spandex shorts, and those pink Chucks i wore on *Jenny Jones*. To set this rather drab and undistinguished bobblehead apart from the others, I would have the spring come out of my feet, not my head, so it looked like i was perpetually giving you the Secret Handshake© ((so, i

mean, sure, maybe that wouldn't technically fit the definition of a "bobblehead" then. Get over it. Furthermore, i was always a little bummed that the He-Who-Cannot-Be-Named bobblehead wasn't him playing nude with a nylon over his head and the spring action applied to his dick in lieu of his head, but that's just me i guess)). I mean, our bobbleheads would fucking KILL! They'd have Keith Morris wishing the bobblehead people would have just done up that Shawn Kerri cartoon skanker instead! All we have to do is just stand by the side of the road looking pathetic long enough until the bobblehead people come by and whisk us off to a better life, and we're golden ((of course, the life of a bobblehead is not always peaches and herb: My dad had one of the original Packer bobbleheads, which he mounted behind the back seats, looking out the rear windshield, so it could entertain those behind him in traffic with its zany bobbleheaded ways. He said that after the Packers lost the 1960 NFL championship game to the Eagles, he almost tore it out, threw it in the street, and jumped on it with both feet, so, with that in mind, it's

probably for the best that there weren't any Boris the Sprinkler bobbleheads released right before the "Gay!" album came out))! COME NOW, BOBBLEHEAD MAKERS OF EARTH!!! What fare can you possibly offer superior to KJ, Kepi, and Rev. Nørb bobbleheads? A Jello Biafra® bobblehead? A Jello Biafra® bobblehead with a shirt, repackaged as a Dr. Frank bobblehead? A Ben Weasel® bobblehead with twin spring-loaded Fists of Fury®? *I say thee NAY, bobblehead producers of the world!* If there's any Bobblehead Justice at all in this universe, you'll heed my plea, and make your next fleet of bobbleheads KJ, Kepi and Nørb-flavored! The only acceptable substitute would be a Nick from Beach Patrol bobblehead, as summer is here and i want to shoot some hoops and, since his head is about as big as a basketball, I figure i can just detach it and go ball it up at the park. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Love,
-Nørb



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NIGHT OWLS
PRINT SHOP

HOT WATER MUSIC
AGAINST ME!
SAMIAM
LIFETIME
BOUNCING
SOULS



DILLINGER FOUR
LESS THAN JAKE
UPRIGHT
CITIZENS BRIGADE
TOURING CO
YOUTH BRIGADE
TED LEO
+
THE PHARMACISTS

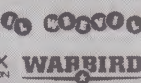
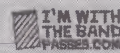
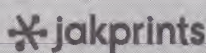
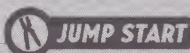
NONE MORE BLACK, PAINT IT BLACK, SMALL BROWN BIKE, DEAD TO ME, TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET, TOYS THAT KILL, TIM BARRY, A WILHELM SCREAM, CIRCLE TAKES THE SQUARE, OFF WITH THEIR HEADS, THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, COBRA SKULLS, MAGRUDERGRIND, BOMB THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, NO TRIGGER, TRAP THEM, DEAR LANDLORD, UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANDYLAND, THE MENZINGERS, THE COPYRIGHTS, BROADWAY CALLS, THE FLATLINERS, THE DOPAMINES, LEMURIA, POLAR BEAR CLUB, LA DISPUTE, THE SOVIETTES, REHASHER, GOOD LUCK, FAKE PROBLEMS, THE ARRIVALS, DEFIANCE, OHIO, ARMALITE, SCREAMING FEMALES, THE RIOT BEFORE, SMOKE OR FIRE, NO FRIENDS, MERCURY PROGRAM

CHEAP GIRLS, NINJA GUN, NOTHINGTON, SHOOK ONES, BANNER PILOT, STATIC RADIO, COLISEUM, CHRIS WOLLARD AND THE SHIP THIEVES, WE ARE THE UNION, GRABASS CHARLESTONS, WORN IN RED, THE MEASURE (SA), TILT WHEEL, BRIDGE AND TUNNEL, BLACKLIST ROYALS, THE BROKEDOWNS, ALGERNON CADWALLADER, RED CITY RADIO, LOOK MEXICO, DIRTY TACTICS, SUCH GOLD, COMADRE, TOUCHE AMORE, GREENLAND IS MELTING, SPANISH GAMBLE, O PIONEERS!, LIVING WITH LIONS, MIKEY ERG, PAUL BARI-BEAU, BURNING LOVE, RVIVR, THE BOMB, AMPERE, NEW BRUISES, WHISKEY & CO., PROTAGONIST, HEARTSOUNDS, COFFEE PROJECT, SAVAGE BREWTALITY, PUNCH, OLD MAN MARKLEY, DEEP SLEEP, NATIVE, CAPSULE, IRON CHIC, A GREAT BIG PILE OF LEAVES, MAKE DO AND MEND, WE WERE SKELETONS, PIANOS BECOME THE TEETH, PYGMY LUSH, CITY OF SHIPS, SPRAYNARD, VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, REGENTS, BANGERS, STREET EATERS, THE HOLY MESS, CUTMAN, JUNIOR BATTLES, DUDE JAMS, BEAST OF NO NATIONS, BUILDING THE STATE, TUBERS, THE TIM VERSION, THE FUTURE NOW, RESTORATIONS, FRANZ NICOLAY, LARRY AND HIS FLASK AVERKIOU, TV CASUALTY (MISFITS TRIBUTE), THE EMOTRON

DAN PADILLA, THE SNIPS, THE CATALYST, SHORES, FUTURE VIRGINS, YOUNG TURKS, CAMPAIGN, OK PILOT, THE ARTERIES, BENT LEFT, SSSNAKES, HOW DARE YOU, GROWN UPS, TIGERS JAW, THE GREAT EXPLAINER, PJ BOND, CARPENTER, ANNABEL, ONE WIN CHOICE, AMATEUR PARTY, CYNICS, SEXY CRIMES, CAPTAIN WE'RE SINKING, SENDERS, PURE GRAFT, CAVES, MIXTAPES, VULTURES UNITED, MOSE GIGANTICUS, MOCKINGBIRD WISH ME LUCK, DUKES OF HILLSBOROUGH, MAX LEVINE ENSEMBLE, BIG EYES, FAILURE'S UNION, 1994!, LANDMINES, AFTER THE FALL, CLETUS, KING FRIDAY, FELLOW PROJECT, GATEWAY DISTRICT, WORTHWHILE WAY, CALVINBALL, LEAGUES APART, GLOCCA MORRA, SLOW DEATH, THE ANCHOR, GODDAMN DOO WOP BAND, BANQUETS, RED COLLAR, WEAK TEETH, NO MORE, REVERSE THE CURSE, ASSASSINATE THE SCIENTIST, ARMY OF PONCH, JEFF ROWE, KOJI, GO RYDELL, PINE HILL HAINTS, FORMER THIEVES, ELWAY, THE WILD, TOO MANY DAVES, JOEY BRIGGS, INXSANE (SLOVENIA), ASTPAI, RUN FOREVER, THE OUTSIDERS, THE MAGNIFICENT, TOBY FOSTER, THE FORTHRIGHTS, SCUM OF THE EARTH

...AND MANY MORE ALUMNI TO COME!!!

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CHICO SIMIO

NO. 27

"TIME FLIES
WHEN..."

•ART•

IT'S HARD
TO BELIEVE,
BUT MY
DAUGHTER
IS 15 YRS
OLD!

15!



I STILL REMEMBER
CHANGING DIA-
PERS, WARMING
BOTTLES, AND
READING BEDTIME
STORIES-SIGH-
THOSE WERE THE
DAYS...SHE WAS SO
TINY...

PRETTY SOON, SHE'LL BE
OFF TO COLLEGE AND I'LL
BE ALL ALONE...



BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE
SHE GOES OR WHAT SHE DOES
BECAUSE SHE'LL ALWAYS BE...



MY
BABY!

DAD!!!



WHAAAT?!

THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

"The kids all loved it! The adults seemed annoyed!"

Czarnuszkka!

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

I've been into my "new life" for eleven days now and I'm already into a pretty steady routine. I wake up around 6AM and do about twenty minutes of stretches on the living room floor to keep my bad back from going crazy again. I head out and pick up a fifty-cent mug of coffee from Bhirdo's gas station. Then I stop at the Sister Bay Piggly Wiggly (that's a grocery store 'round these parts, in case you're wonderin') to pick up various soup ingredients and oddball twelve-packs of soda. My next stop is the soup shop. I pull out the frozen bread doughs to thaw and start warming up the soups. I put the Descendents *Everything Sucks* on the CD player and rock out in my apron.

This all seems pretty normal to me. I've been working in restaurants for over twenty years. I've been rocking out to this Descendents album at work for over ten years at least. I'm so used to listening to this album and nodding my head and pretty much agreeing with Milo for every verse. Suddenly, one of the songs no longer seems right to me. Many a morning I've listened to this album at work and the song "This Place Sucks" has always rung true. These last few days I've found myself thinking about that song and how I can't relate so much anymore. This place *doesn't* suck. I've made my own job, my own place of work, and I made it so that I *wouldn't* think it sucks. I *like* my new workplace. The Queers and New Bomb Turks playlists are sounding different as well.

In case you weren't here last issue, I opened up my own little restaurant. I bought a tiny building in a small tourist town here in northern Wisconsin, spent this last winter turning it into a soup diner, and I now work for myself. Today was my eleventh day of business with Czarnuszkka Soup Bar. A Polish-themed soup bar oddly stuck here in this Scandinavian-themed tourist area. In these early days of the business I knew that I would be stuck in this tiny building for fifteen hours every day. I wanted to make sure it would be comfortable and cozy. For me, it does not suck. I am very happy in my little Polish slice of heaven just 150 feet off the shore of Lake Michigan.

(Congratulations, Chickenpants, but I'm afraid to say you seem pretty content with

your new life. Let's hope you don't lose that angst-ridden inspiration for ruckus! – F.F.)

I must admit, Funyuns, that I am quite happy working in my own restaurant. However, there is a whole new set of things that piss me off to no end. The first is what they call *commercial building code*. I took a little cottage-like gift shop and turned it into a foodservice establishment. With this change of use in my building I had to bring *everything* up to code. I had to build a wheelchair ramp up to the front door and widen the front door. I had to install a ventilation system, hood exhaust system, and make-up-air system. These items alone almost cost as much as I paid for the building itself! The gentlemen installing the ventilation system and make-up-air system told me that I really don't realistically *need* them, but commercial code requires them. Thousands and thousands of dollars later, I have all this fancy stuff that I unplugged and rarely plan on using.

[Hey, Chicken, you were the one who wanted to open your own restaurant. You should've anticipated these start-up costs. – Dr. S.]

I *did* anticipate these costs. I had them all figured into my business plan. I knew these things were required and I took out enough loans to cover all costs. There were, however, a few unanticipated costs which will fuel my ruckus for the next decade at least. The worst of which is the goldang wheelchair ramp handrail. Now, I fully understand why there should be a strong, accessible handrail on any wheelchair ramp. What I don't understand is the newest version of the building code that requires me to buy a specific handrail design that's from a specific brand. My head contractor Fuzzy told me I wouldn't like the estimated cost of my required handrail. He was right. I felt seven hundred dollars was nothing short of extortion. After the railing came in and I got the *real* bill, I was enraged into near disbelief. How on earth could a twelve-foot handrail cost me \$1,217? I'm gonna have to sell a helluva lot of soup to pay for *that*!

My rage level was at an all-time high. Later that week, Fuzzy put in the railing and I was shocked to find that my \$1,217 handrail was nothing more than PVC piping with aluminum piping inside of it and a few brackets. The materials could not have cost more than a hundred bucks. I asked Fuzzy why this flimsy assemblage of cheap

materials was costing me \$1,217. He looked at me matter-of-factly and said, "Because the legal building code requires you to have it." MmmmmmmMMWHAAAAH!!!! CHICKEN SMASH!!!! WHERE'S MY DRUMS!!!!!!

(Twelve hundred dollars for a twelve-foot handrail? That IS pretty ridiculous. – F.F.)

CHICKEN ENRAGED!!!! CHICKEN VERY ANGRY!!!! CHICKEN WANNA SMASH!!!!

[Heck, that's so ridiculous even I wanna pound out some ruckus! – Dr. S.]

All I want to do is explode in chaotic wild-ass rhythms, but I'M WORKING OVER 15-HOUR DAYS, EVERY DAY. Needless to say, I have not partaken in holy ruckus at all lately. My drums are collecting dust in the basement while I'm busy making soups for the proletariat of northern Wisconsin. I'm afraid I will have to pull out some squirreled away tale of ancient ruckus again.

(Well, here we go again. When are we gonna get some NEW ruckus? – F.F.)

Dinghole Report #121: Ancient Ruckus I Vaguely Remember

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #twenty-something)

It was shortly after I was hatched, maybe a month or two out of the eggshell. I kept my chickenkit in my car's backseat in those days, always ready for sneak-attack ruckus! I was driving through the small lakeshore town of Ephraim, just a few blocks away from what is now my soup bar. There appeared to be a good crowd at the beach and I had time to spare. I pulled into the last open spot at the beach parking lot, pulled out my then-shiny chickenkit, and started smashing away with reckless abandon! The kids all loved it! The adults seemed annoyed! With one final blast, I finished my rapid-fire gig and began tearing down my kit. Just then a police officer tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Was that you making all that racket?" I pulled off my chickenhead and stared him straight in the eyes before I answered, "No."

–Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





LUBRANO

CHICKEN ENRAGED!!!!
CHICKEN VERY ANGRY!!!!
CHICKEN WANNA SMASH!!!!



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"No exploding bubble. Nay on the doomsday."

The Death of Laughter

A bit of hubbub has been going on this year about the rapture. It's not some new-fangled Hollywood version of what the earth's demise will entail on the silver screen, starring some Troy McClure wannabe. No, according to some folks who have some personal repertoire with a higher authority, our inhabited ball of heathen rock and water will soon perish—October 21, 2011, to be exact.

What was all the commotion about on May 21? Well, supposedly, that was the day all of the good people, let's call them the UnHeathens (like how 7UP® called themselves "The Uncola" back in the '70s), were supposed to be taken away from earth, so's god himself could rain blood and pestilence upon the unbelievers for five continuous months, until the game over shit hits the fan in October. So you see, don't go writing it all off just yet—we're still in the game.

What's that? Why are so many UnHeathens still here amongst us? I have a theory, so stick with me on this: Harold Camping (the fanatic who gave mathematics a bad name with all of this past/present/future "the end is near!" calculating) struck a deal with the IUTF (International Union of Tooth Fairies) and successfully ratified a one-off bargaining agreement for tooth fairies worldwide to pull double duty on the evening of May 20. Tooth Fairies globally were instructed to instill reality-distorting eye drops into the Heathens' eyes whilst they slept, so when they awoke the next morning, all would seem normal, just as they would have suspected—everyone's still here on earth, no rapture. But, you're wrong, we're all wrong. Those Ned Flanders-types you think you're still seeing? They ain't there, sinners. They haven't been here since they got whisked away last May.

Think my theory is an over thought-out sack of shit? Watch the movie *They Live* and then tell me that, Heathen Child. Totally possible, except it's eye drops in this scenario I'm painting, instead of sunglasses from the movie. Oh, and speaking of which, here's an interesting factoid—famous wrestler "Rowdy" Roddy Piper starred in *They Live*, and another famous wrestler by the name of "Macho Man" Randy Savage ("SNAP INTO A SLIM JIM"®) passed away on May 20. Is your butthole puckering yet? It should be and this is obviously just one theory. Once you've

thought about it, unclench your buttocks and feel free to draw your own conclusions. Screwy as they may be, I'm sure they'll be just as entertaining.

Seriously though, folks, if rock'n'roll has taught us anything, it's that the end of our little planet could be lurking like a mugger right around the corner at any given time. Or not.

Take the Ramones' second verse from "All the Way," off of their 1980 *End of the Century* record, for instance:

Doomsday, doomsday's coming, 1981 / But until things blow, I'm gonna have some fun / The bubble's going to explode / Probably never live to get old

This song was released over thirty-one years ago, and we're all still havin' some fun. No exploding bubble. Nay on the doomsday. So much for Joey and Dee Dee's preliminary visions of world destruction. In fact, the only thing that got destroyed during the making of that record was studio engineer Larry Levine's ticker, living through a second heart attack due to Phil Spector's out-of-his-tree behavior during the recording sessions.

One of England's greatest exports, Black Sabbath (1970-81, that is), were always on the money when it came to the world's inevitable destruction, mostly at the hands of the world leaders yanking the puppet strings of war. Even they touched on the topic of the world getting taken down in one fell swoop. Taken from their 1970 LP *Paranoid*, this verse from "Electric Funeral" reads like a General Electric-sponsored doomsday decree:

And so in the sky/ Shines the electric eye / Supernatural king / Takes Earth under his wing / Heaven's golden chorus sings / Hell's angels flap their wings / Evil souls fall to Hell / Ever trapped in burning cells!

Did Sabbath know something that we didn't back then, including the all-knowing and ruler of the universe having a laser-fitted eyeball? Sounds gnarly, and before any of you get all excited and think you figured out where the Hell's Angels motorcycle club got their name, calm down—that name was coined twenty-two years prior in 1948, but that's a whole other column.

Like a whole lot of us who simply cannot stomach the cash-raping religious right and

their ilk, Lemmy Kilmister wrote a fitting verse addressing these types in the song "Bad Religion," off of Motörhead's 1992 *March or Die* LP, reminding those criminals who hide behind god for a buck aren't safe when the final days draw near:

Bad religion, bad religion / I say that thou art liars, thy souls shall not be saved / Bad religion, bad religion / Here are the days of thunder / The days that thou hast made

Lemmy's voice about world leadership and religion through song over the years has always reflected the obvious, often "un-pc" or "unpopular" opinions. I think that's just one facet of what makes him and Motörhead so fuggin' great. Quote the great Aaron Neville classic hit from 1966: "Tell It Like It Is." End of the world be damned; Lemmy will most definitely keep telling it like it is.

American roots-rock icon Johnny Cash penned one of his last songs written on the matter as well, the apocalyptic title track "The Man Comes Around" from his 2002 *American IV: The Man Comes Around* LP. Within the verses are lyrics of biblical proportions, even though Mr. Cash's angel wings got somewhat tattered throughout his life early on:

There's a man going around taking names / And he decides who to free and who to blame / Everybody won't be treated all the same / There'll be a golden ladder reaching down / When the man comes around

When this record was released, there were those who saw it as Cash's reflections of a life hard spent. Or is that well spent? Anyhow, regardless of his past deeds, Johnny Cash had always seemed the type of guy to keep the lines open with the big guy/girl/what have you upstairs. A very visible dotted line can be drawn from Mr. Cash's vast catalog and the later year's work of one Michael Ness of the seminal Orange Country band, Social Distortion. With Ness following in the footsteps of his roots-rock predecessor, an album's worth of gospel tunes ain't too far off, especially if you've paid any attention to that latest Social D record. Long way from home, that one was.

Believe it or not, even Creedence Clearwater Revival inked a tune of the



RYAN HORKY

If rock'n'roll has taught us anything,
it's that the end of our little planet could be
lurking like a mugger right around the corner at
any given time. Or not.

impending apocalypse, with "Bad Moon Rising" off of their third 1969 full-length, *Green River*. Call me fuckin' crazy, but if you never happened to hear this tune in your life and you read the following verses, it could easily be right along the lyrical lines of a Slayer tune:

*I see the bad moon arising / I see trouble
on the way / I see earthquakes and lightnin' /
I see bad times today*

*I hear hurricanes ablowing / I know the
end is coming soon / I fear rivers over flowing
/ I hear the voice of rage and ruin*

*Hope you got your things together /
Hope you are quite prepared to die / Looks
like we're in for nasty weather / One eye is
taken for an eye*

Not so "Summer Of Love"-sounding
now, is it, filthy hippie? And don't forget

to throw in the chorus of impending doom
between each verse:

*Don't go around tonight / Well, it's
bound to take your life / There's a bad moon
on the rise*

(Incidentally, speaking of Slayer, they put out an insane retrospective box set back in 2003 aptly entitled *Soundtrack to the Apocalypse*, but you really can't go wrong with any of their releases. Just putting that out there.)

If and when our planet happens to explode/implode, burn to a crisp, endure a sequel to Noah's Ark, shatter apart into trillions of bite-sized pieces, or get kicked into the next galaxy light years away like a soccer ball because the HCIC (Head Creator In Charge) has finally had enough—would it even matter who's right? I mean, keep in

mind that the Heathens and UnHeathens are supposedly going to be amongst their own, post-rapture. Segregated, if you will, so who's to say whose grass is gonna be greener?

I think the world is going to cease to exist when humans have forgotten how to enjoy the simple things in life like love, laughter, and the kick-ass rock'n'roll you read about in this magazine you're holding. Without these or any other kinds of joy in your life, you may as well saddle up with one of The Four Horsemen and wing fiery road apples at passers-by as you gallop through the streets during opening day of the apocalypse. At least you'll go out with a smile. When it happens, of course.

I'm Against It,
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



MY FORTY-SEVENTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT.

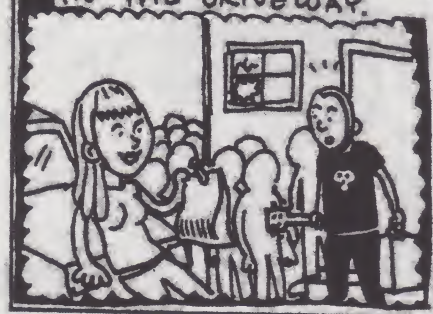
JUNE 14, 2006, IT WAS MY THIRTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY.



I WAS ON TOUR WITH J CHURCH, WE WERE IN LAS CRUCES, NM



OUTSIDE THE SHOW, I SPIED A CUTE GIRL DRINKING A SPACE BAG IN THE DRIVEWAY.



WE TALKED FOR HOURS. WHEN WE RAN OUT OF WINE, WE WALKED TO THE LIQUOR STORE TOGETHER.



IT WAS A LONG WALK. WE STOPPED FOR A BREAK IN AN IRRIGATION DITCH, AND WE KISSED.



THE NEXT DAY AS THE BAND HEADED OFF TO CALIFORNIA, I KEPT THINKING ABOUT HER.



WE STAYED IN TOUCH OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, EACH VISITING THE OTHER IN OUR RESPECTIVE HOME-TOWNS.



WHEN SHE + HER HOUSEMATES GOT EVICTED, SHE DECIDED TO MOVE TO AUSTIN.



ON OUR FIRST DATE FINALLY LIVING IN THE SAME CITY, WE WENT FOR A CANOE RIDE OUT ON TOWN LAKE.



FIVE YEARS LATER, I TOOK HER ON THAT SAME CANOE RIDE AGAIN...



... AND THIS TIME I HAD A QUESTION FOR HER.



SHE SAID YES, AND I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.



FOR LUSTER KABOOM

TXT: (WON)TON-NOTNOW

AMERICA'S FAVORITE PHONE X TO SEXT!

BY LUCKY NAKAZAWA

I LOST MY CELL PHONE AND NOW I HAVE TO CALL IT TO LOCATE IT. RIGHT NOW I REGRET PUTTING MYSELF ON THE BLOCK CALL LIST.

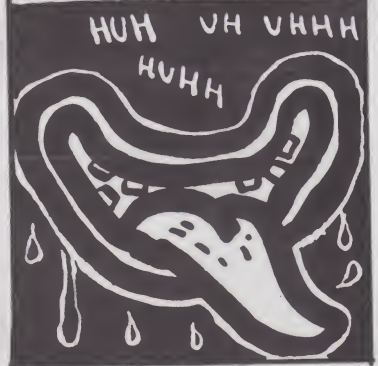


I BLOCKED MYSELF BECAUSE I WAS GETTING REALLY OFFENDED WHEN I GAVE MYSELF OBSCENE CALLS AND SEXTS.

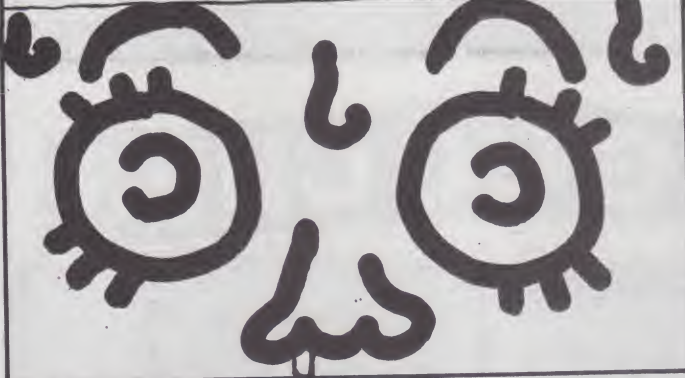


I JUST PLUCKED A NOSE HAIR THAT IS COMPLETELY WHITE! I'M SO OLD!!

SOMETIMES I WOULD CALL MYSELF AND ASK WHAT I WAS WEARING.



ONE TIME I WAS BABYSITTING AND I KEPT GETTING SCARY PHONE CALLS. I TOLD THE OPERATOR AND SHE SAID SHE WOULD TRACE THE INCOMING CALLS.



OH WAIT NEVER MIND, IT WAS JUST A BONE.

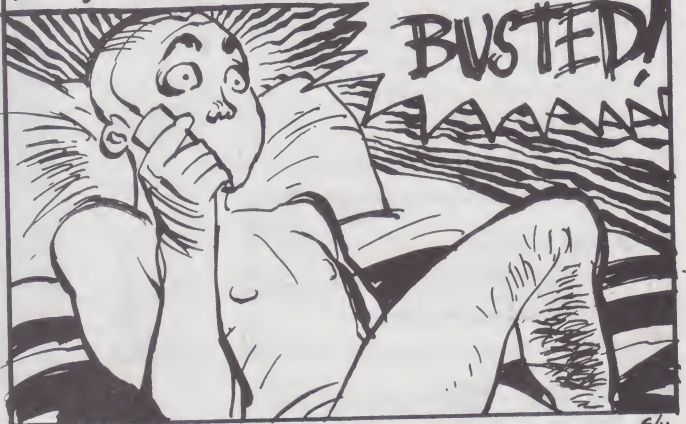
THE OPERATOR CALLED ME RIGHT BACK AND TOLD ME TO GET THE BABIES AND RUN OUTSIDE BECAUSE SHE TRACED THE CALLS AND THEY WERE COMING FROM INSIDE MY PHONE!



I USED TO HAVE A SECRET SECOND PHONE SO THAT I COULD CHEAT ON MYSELF AND HAVE SECRET AFFAIRS. BUT ONE DAY I ACCIDENTALLY FOUND IT.



I RE-DIALED THE LAST NUMBER CALLED AND... I PICKED UP ON THE OTHER END AND WAS TOTALLY



Download the Sext App at www.Razercake.org. Choose from Ben Snakepit, Joe Dana or Lucky Nakazawa. Codeword "FUCK YOU DALE!"

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MISCHIEF★BREW



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CHINESE TELEPHONES *Democracy LP*

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HOUSE BOAT *The Delaware Octopus CD/LP*

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CRUSADES *The Sun Is Down And The Night Is Riding In LP*



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ONE WEEK AFTER DANNY GRADUATES, WE GO ON A 4-DAY LOOP THROUGH THE SOUTH WEST. 4 SHOWS, 12 BANDS, THOUSANDS OF CALTI, 1 SPEEDING TICKET AND SEVERAL BEERS LATER WE RETURN TO L.A. EXHAUSTED AND BROKE BUT SATISFIED AND GRATEFUL FOR THE ROAD WAS KIND.

OUR FIRST STOP IS TEMPE, ARIZONA AT FIXX CAFE.



IT'S 100 DEGREES OUTSIDE AND THERE'S A TOW TRUCK CIRCLING LIKE A VULTURE

WE PLAY WITH THAT'S LIFE (A LOCAL 3-PIECE)



RUMSPRINGER (PARTY!)

AND GAY KISS (BLAST BEATS WITH A X-SHAPED GUITAR).



ONE GUY IS SUPER INTO IT, APPARENTLY ON BATHING SALTS.

WE SPEND THE NIGHT IN A FRIEND'S HOTEL ROOM-WITH A GROWLER FROM A LOCAL BREWERY.



SATURDAY AFTERNOON: ON THE WAY TO NEW MEXICO WE GET PULLED OVER AND WRITTEN A SPEEDING TICKET



WHEN WE FINALLY REACH LAS CRUCES, WE ARE GREETED WITH HIGH-5S FROM OLD+NEW FRIENDS



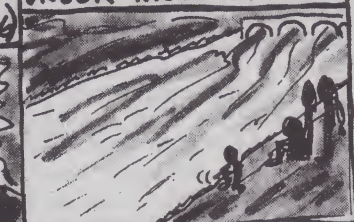
EVERYONE'S LAID BACK AND FRIENDLY AS HELL.

WE PLAY WITH BOBBY JOE EBOLA AND THE CHILDREN MAC NUGGETS (VERY INSPIRING)



AND GRASS-WATCHING MY FRIENDS PLAYING BRUTAL SLUDGE MAKES ME HAPPY.

IT FEELS OTHERWORLDLY UNDER THESE STARS.

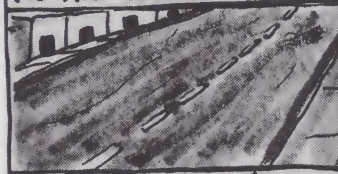


THE NEXT DAY WE SIT ON THE BANKS OF THE RIO GRANDE AND SEE 150YR. OLD ADOBE HOUSES.

WE SPEND THE REST OF THE NIGHT CONVERSING OVER PIZZA AND BEER.



HEADING WEST TO ARIZONA TRYING NOT TO SPEED, WE PASS SEVERAL CHECKPOINTS.



WHEN WE REACH TUSCON THE STREETS SEEM LONG AND DESERTED BUT AGAIN WE'RE WELCOMED BY KIND HOSTS.

MEMORIAL DAY-WE STOP IN A LARGE SAGUARO PATCH ON OUR WAY TO SAN DIEGO



I COLLECT A FEW DRIED FLOWERS HOPING TO FIND SEEDS AND GROW MY OWN.

THE SHOW'S AT THE DRY RIVER COLLECTIVE AND IT LIVES UP TO ITS NAME



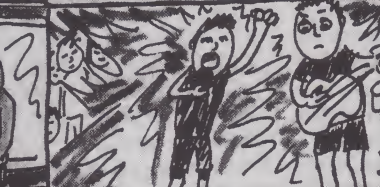
IT'S SUPER DRY AND WINDY AND I'M A BIT INTIMIDATED BY THE TOUGH LOOKING KIDS

IT'S BITTERSWEET BEING BACK IN CALIFORNIA.



THE SHOW'S AT A BAR, JASON WEEON OPENS ON HIS ACOUSTIC GUITAR.

WE PLAY WITH EN CAHOOTS AND NOT SORRY (WHO KNOCKS MY SOCKS OFF).



THE TOUGH LOOKING KIDS END UP DANCING FOR OUR SET AND BEING VERY GENEROUS.

REGRESSION IS NEXT (TIGHT!) THEN WE PLAY AND JUMP ON OUR FRIENDS STANDING IN THE CROWD.



IT'S SILLY AND SWEET

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST INTERNATIONAL DIPSHIT FINISHES THE NIGHT OFF.



AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE, I FEEL SLIGHTLY OPTIMISTIC



SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

**"Gay zombie
porn as a
weapon."**

Digital Donuts Will Be the End of Humankind

The other day I was on my bi-weekly phone call to my friend in Houston and once again the conversation turned to technology. He accused me of being a technophobe. Usually, I pass off this accusation with a nervous laugh, but after the call I started contemplating this phobia. I first started holding a grudge against technology when music stores started closing by the fistful and music was being designed for computer downloading. Where's the fun in picking and choosing songs rather than getting complete albums? It was bad enough when the 12" album gave way to the five-inch disk and the lyric sheets became incomprehensible. I'm forty-six and farsighted, which means I'll need a microscope to sing along soon. The artwork on album covers was also tossed to the dogs. I also found a personal joy in hunting through used bins.

My current tech pet peeve is texting! How disconnected does one have to be to not be able to hold a conversation? The unfortunate part is I had to get a phone plan that includes texting because that's the only way I can reply or make actual contact with others. I'm a fairly big guy with oven mitt hands and the keyboard on a cell phone is for munchkins. I bet with their stubby fingers, even they have a hard time.

On the subject of texting, why is it that idiots feel the need to use phones while driving? It's just a few more brain cells being taken away from the task at hand. A law gets passed banning talking, so people go to texting, which takes several more motor neurons and brain cells away from the driving task.

I think what really started my pondering was an ordeal I had at school with another classmate. We had to turn in a report. Since I type everything I turn in, I was asked if I was a good writer and if I could look over a report for this classmate's English class. Reluctantly, I said I could look it over. It was English 100, the class that transfers a student to the four-year college system. There were sentences in this paper—that no matter how you rearranged words—the reader would be left scratching their heads as to the meaning. I've been accused of writing like I talk, and I saw this in this paper. In just the first page I found whole paragraphs that read like a train wreck. Even simple punctuation was tossed out the window.

I ask, "How is this possible with spell check on a computer?" My conclusion is that with technology, reading and writing are no longer priorities in elementary and high schools because people think computers do these functions for them. I don't believe my classmate's paper to be an isolated case either. I've run into this in many classes through the years, where an instructor has had to explain that a student's writing skills are sub-par.

Being an engineering major, one would think I should be all-embracing of changing technology. For the most part, I see the need. But you just can't give an atom bomb to an idiot.

It's no surprise America's facing an obesity problem. We now place computers—in one form or another—in front of the public that allows them to stay in one position and shop, listen to music, and alienate themselves from society. I dread the day that the computer actually becomes a food replicator. Damn you, Mr. Roddenberry!

Technology is too powerful a tool to give to the masses. Just ask the guy across the street who plays video games on his big screen in the garage, while his kid rides his Big Wheel in the middle of the street out of the parent's unwatchful eye.

The masses must take responsibility for the unholy power that Mr. Gates and Mr. Jobs has bestowed upon them. The next businesses that we are in the midst of seeing crumble are books. I walked into Barnes & Nobles last night just to be greeted by the "Nook" ebook reader display. For the love of god, now I don't even need to lift a finger to turn a page. Doughnut, please! This technology was developed for the disabled, and what do you know? Everyone is apparently disabled.

In the new Green Lantern movie, the evil guy is named Hector Hammond and his problem is that in his attempt to become the smartest man alive his body atrophies and his melon becomes giant. He becomes confined to a chair. Hammond can, however, do his bidding mentally. What fun it must be to throw something with your brain.

What we need to do is get the hell off the keyboard and out into the world, meet some people, see some sights, learn some things on our own, and not be so reliant on a machine to entertain us, inform us, or teach us.

The one thing science fiction seldom took into account with humans was our strong ability for complacency. Make life easy or a make it a struggle? Most will take easy. Hell, even Captain Kirk got chubby!

HELL BOUND.

Collection of writers, \$4

This one has a lot of blood splattering going on. From serial killers to evil clowns, this book has a collection of one-page stories to add suspense or make your skin crawl. These stories take you back to the '50s when monsters and UFOs dotted the big picture screen. My favorite is "The Pukwudgie," a little dude who asks for a buck and you best give it to him. Plenty of ghost stories fill the pages also. This one is best read when it gets dark to make you think of the possibilities. (Boston horror comics, riverbirdstudios, blogspot.com, strangefruitcomics.com, bostoncomicsroundtable.com)

FEEDING GROUND #1.

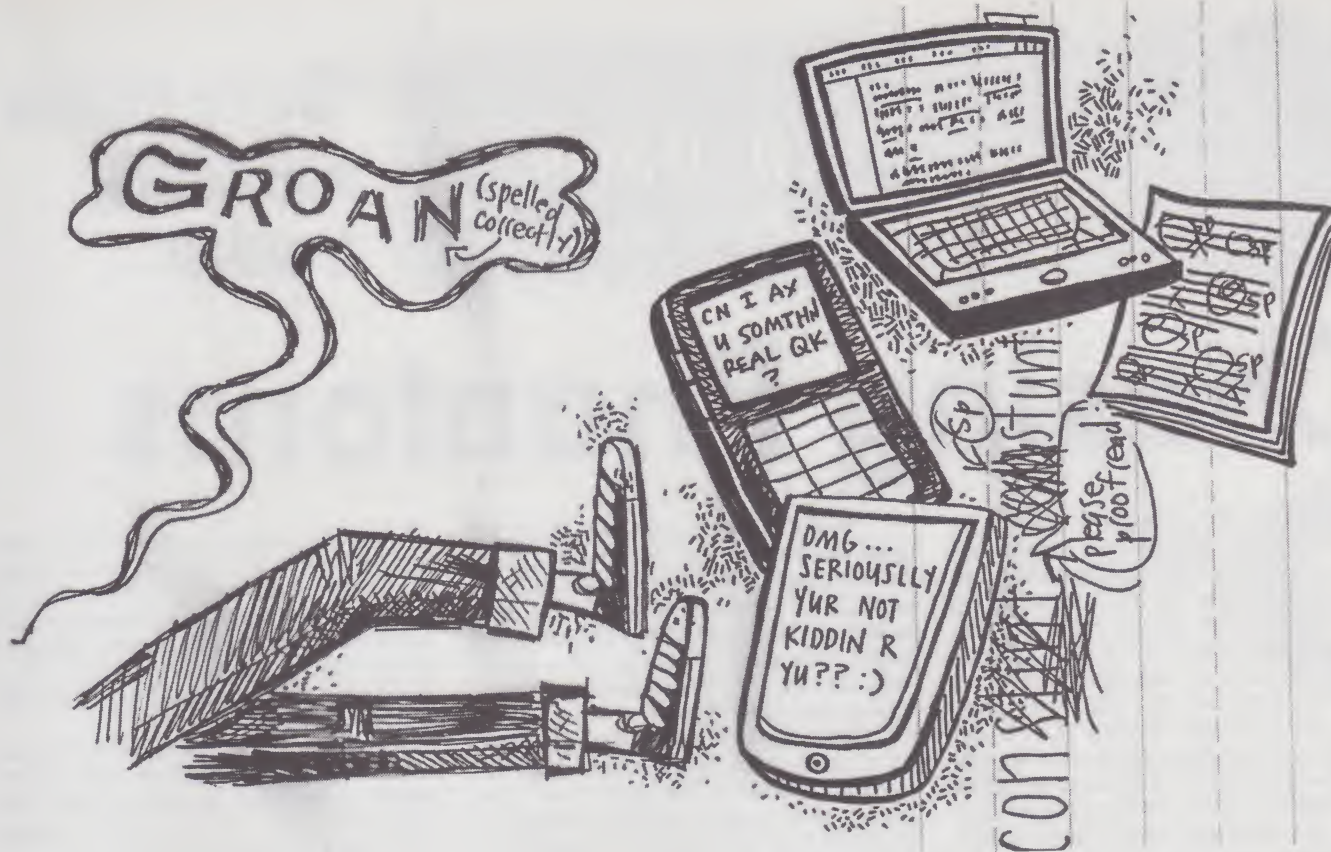
by Lang, Lapinski, & Mangun, \$3.95

Wow, what a storyline here! *Feeding Ground* allows the reader the option of English or Spanish translation, depending on which side you start. This story brings to the surface the horrors families face in the border towns of Mexico. It is a very suspenseful tale of a family trying to make it in a town controlled by tyrant. The artwork is done in such a way as to add feeling to the story. It is a little bloody, but not overdone. The underlying current of corruption can be the only reason this is suggested for mature readers. This is only the first book in a series and, already, so much suspense is built, I'm eager for the next book to hit the stands. A very moving comic. One that readers will enjoy. (Archaia Entertainment LLC, 1680 Vine St., Suite 912, LA, CA 90082, archaia.com)

TIME LINCOLN VS CUBA COMMANDER #1.

by Fred Perry, \$3.99

All right, I know it sounds a little corny, but anytime I see Abraham Lincoln strapped in futuristic gear still maintaining the stove pipe hat, I give in. From a history buff's point of view, this story has it all—if you can just follow the timelines and how the characters get from place to place. When it



NATION OF AMANDA

You just can't give an atom bomb to an idiot.

comes right down to it, it's the story of the struggle for power between the capitalists and the communists. The only thing for the reader to do is understand how the characters throughout history get thrown into the fray. The artwork is very slick, so there's no takeaway there. The only problem is that too many historical figures at once are hard to stomach. This is Justice League with historical figures. If you can get by that, it's a good read. (Antarctic Press, 7272 Wurzbach, Suite 204, San Antonio, TX 78240, apmanga.com)

THE TICK NEW SERIES #6, by Cereno & McClaine, \$4.95

The Tick is one of my all time favorites, so I'm always eager to see if a new writer can hold a candle to the great Ben Edlund. It seems once again that the measuring stick isn't long enough. New England Comics seems more interested in quantity than quality. Yes, The Tick was not the sharpest pencil in the box, but it seems like he's just getting stupider and grumpier. Is it possible that he's getting less nigh-invulnerable? The bigger fish fry is the addition of way too many new characters. That just smooths out the

oddities of each other one. I love The Tick, so could you guys at New England please reemploy Ben? (New England Comics, Inc., 732 Washington St. Norwood, MA 02062, support@newenglandcomics.com, newenglandcomics.com)

INBOUND COMICS FROM BOSTON, collection of writers, \$12

This is the "food" issue, so all stories relate to acquiring, cooking, and eating food. What better way to put together a collection than to make it food based? This one has so many clever stories on the way food makes us nuts. My favorite is "Discovery" in which the traditional idea of lightning and fire make cold meat into hot meat. It is always a treat to see how evolution goes from zero to sixty in a few seconds. Serving food in a comical sense is what this book does best. I give it four stars. (bostoncomicsroundtable.com)

IT WILL ALL MAKE SENSE TOMORROW #1, by Totten, \$??

Simply put, this guy is a mess that requires a band aid. This little book contains two stories I presume to be about the author. The first is about how bad his eyesight is

and the second is about his insomnia. The stories are funny and terrifying at the same time, especially the latter. All I can say is that hallucinated gnomes in any form should tell you something about your prescription drug's reaction. (Sandentotten@hotmail.com)

BRAIN FOOD #17, by Toft, \$1

It's a pleasure to see that Mr. Toft is still at it exploiting the ridiculousness of world politics by introducing gay zombie porn as a weapon. Every time I read a copy of *Brain Food*, I wonder how high of a diving board this guy is willing to dive off. This book is still at it, dragging religious fanatics and political figures through the perverse muck of a world created by a rabbit. Why a rabbit? This book is written so well that I'm sure the government is watching him very closely. If you don't shy away from the more perverted side of our society, this book is a must read. (Mike Toft, PO Box 7246, MPLS, MN 55407, brainfood.thecomicsseries.com, miketoft@usiwireless.com)

—Gary Hornberger



GUEST COLUMN

NATE GANCELHOFF

“We’re gonna see some freaks!”

Chasing Phantoms

We passed around a plastic pipe as we huddled next to a tiny lake out past the last rows of suburbia, through the woods and down gravel roads. We had nicknamed the pipe “Chilli Willy” and gradually got high off the lousy weed. It was a great spot: no normal member of society would spend their free time next to Little Long Lake at ten o’clock in the evening. If a car did happen to show up you’d hear it far enough in advance to launch Willy into the woods and pretend you were admiring the polluted little pond, nodding contently at the strings of garbage clinging to the shore. It was a peaceful spot. It was a place to step away from the slow, dull whirr of the world and reflect on life’s mysteries.

“Yeah, but that’s the whole point,” I said, breaking into a phlegmy cough. “Scrappy Doo was never funny, even once. He fucking sucked.”

Everyone nodded.

After one more bowl and a discussion of the quality of gas station burritos we decided it was time to hit the road. Cody and I had school the next day and Dave had to sleep on a couch the next day. As we left the lake behind and headed back into suburbia, I noticed a spotlight in the sky. I had spotted it earlier by the lake while getting stoned and promptly forgot about it. Now it waved back and forth in front of me down the road ahead. It looked like a yellow rainbow that was flipping. I was fascinated.

My companions were quickly intrigued too. We decided that if we ran into the light’s origin before I got dropped off, we would check out whatever it was. We hadn’t found it by the time we neared my house, but we were far too immersed to give up the search so we headed onward.

I decided it must be a car dealership or something along those lines, but then I realized—who the fuck in suburbia is going to advertise their business with a spotlight at eleven on a weekday? It was becoming increasingly perplexing.

The beam was getting bigger and bigger now, a huge ray of light slicing through the sky, an increasingly effective bit of eye candy for our drug-addled heads. About every twenty seconds one of us would say, “Here it comes... Damn!”

We still weren’t close enough to see what the business was. Was it going to be in Minneapolis? That would make the most sense, but it would be annoying, in a way, as it would require us to navigate streets and utilize some sense of direction; thus far we were just cruising down a straight freeway staring at a beam of light.

Then, just as we were having second thoughts about the merits of our quest, the light got really close. We looked over to our left and there it was: a gigantic spotlight in the middle of the Toys“R”Us parking lot. As Cody excitedly headed over to the exit, I racked my brain. What could a toy store be so concerned about advertising in the middle of April, especially late at night? What was the significance of today? Then it hit me as I remembered a magazine article.

“Dude, I know what it is! It’s the fucking Star Wars toy premiere! They’re opening it up at midnight—in twenty minutes!”

We cheered at the prospect of having found something potentially interesting. I was aware of the impending release of *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. Characters from the film had stared back at me from Mountain Dew cans for weeks, but I felt nothing from that. I had no desire to learn more about Sebulba (“the best Podracer on Tatooine, he is also the most feared,” the can said). The people assembled in a toy store parking lot at midnight on a weekday night, though, would likely know much about Sebulba and be driven and determined to obtain multiple plastic figurines of him. “We’re gonna see some freaks!” Dave shouted as we wheeled into the parking lot.

It was a strikingly bizarre sight, probably partly because the pot had not quite worn off yet. Dozens and dozens of people formed a row snaking all the way alongside the building. An almost equal number of green lights waved in the night, held proudly by dedicated fans. What the hell? Oh yeah... light sabers.

A familiar feeling hit me as we got out of the car and strolled up to the line: “I do not belong here.”

I get that feeling a lot at places like shopping malls and churches, family reunions, and at my various places of employment. Sometimes it’s an uneasy feeling of being out

of place, like when you’re at a party where you don’t know anybody and you’re waiting for your friend to show up. Sometimes it’s a good, rejuvenating feeling of doing something unexpected. That was the feeling I had as we got in place as I thought to myself, “Wow, this is hilariously weird that I’m about to wait in line for Star Wars toys.”

An employee walked up as we settled into line and handed us our light sabers, which weren’t even Star Wars products, but rather green glow sticks. Cheap. I checked out the row of people ahead of us. I saw that besides a couple of twelve- or thirteen-year-old kids, we were by far the youngest people there. The crowd was mostly men in their thirties on up to their fifties, guys who were little kids when the first movies came out. It was weird listening to middle-aged men excitedly explain to their friends the features on a Darth Maul action figure.

“Well, I’m probably going to buy four of the Qui-Gon Jinn’s,” a bearded guy directly in front of us explained to his companions. “One to open and three to keep in their boxes.”

Another Toys“R”Us employee walked up and down the line, trying to start small talk with people. “So you guys big Star Wars fans, huh?” he asked, smiling. “Naw man, we were just following the light.”

The people behind us overheard our ramblings on the craziness of the whole scene and started to get smarmy and hostile. “When midnight hits, those guys are getting trampled. Heheheheh.” And, “What’s up with all the kids here?” Yeah, kids at a toy store. How bizarre. I guess the hostility was based on their keen observation that we were not genuine Star Wars fans. This was fueled by us saying things like, “Man, I’m gonna get three Captain Kirks!”

More people continued to show up and we were soon in the middle of the line instead of at the end. I suddenly wondered who was first in line and walked up to get a look. He was by himself in a chair, covered in blankets, his eyes peering into the store with quiet determination. He was there alone, talking to no one. I discovered later on the news that he had been there since 5:00 or so—while the store was still open and full of customers. Now that’s dedication, I thought. Utterly baffling dedication.



**“So you guys big Star Wars fans, huh?” he asked, smiling.
“Naw man, we were just following the light.”**

Before we had time to go back to the car to smoke another bowl, figuring it would make the scene even more amusing, midnight hit and the doors opened. Boom! People were running, slamming into each other, creating a huge whirlwind down the aisles, past the registers, past the toy bikes, past the Pokémons and Beanie Babies, towards the glorious mecca of *Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace* toy bins. We ran, too, with huge grins on our faces as we yelled, “Hurry! Hurry! HURRY!” to add more fuel to the fire.

Within seconds, all the people from the line were inside, running throughout the store, and we sat back and became spectators. People with full shopping carts sped around with an uneasy glint in their eyes, as if this was a very serious competition they were involved in and the failure to procure a third Destroyer Droid would earn them a badge of shame.

Examining the goods ourselves, we didn’t see what all this chaos was for. The toys weren’t anything special. In fact, some of them had clearly been slapped together in an effort to create a figure for every obscure character that appeared in the film. Plus, regardless of what the crazed men running amok around us thought, they

probably wouldn’t end up being worth anything. The toy companies, anticipating a huge demand, had produced a ridiculous number and now there would be too many floating around for them to be rare or worth anything. (A trip to a store months later confirmed this, as I spotted a large bin with a sign that said something like, “Jar Jar Binks action figures now twenty-three cents, or you can trade us your used toilet paper for them. We don’t care, just fucking get them out of our sight.”)

The enthusiasm continued to run high in the Toys“R”Us that night. We spotted a local camera crew and performed dumb stunts in front of them, moving with them as they walked around the store. As one man solemnly discussed his new belongings to a cameraman, Dave stood directly behind him with a stack of fifteen toy boxes, moving back and forth saying, “Careful... careful.” Attempts to get an interview of our own were rejected, as the local journalists keenly deduced we were not legitimate fans.

Eventually people had reached their various quotas and started to make their way to the checkout lane. With both the toy-fueled craziness and the effects of pot fading, we decided to leave, but not before

I bought a pack of gum. The guy in front of me in line spent seven hundred dollars. On Star Wars toys.

The next morning Dave taped the news just in case we made it on and, surprisingly, we did. The story was a couple minutes long with information about both the movie and toys, including a couple of interviews with the more fanatical buyers. Cut between all of this, they used a quick shot of Dave grabbing a Darth Maul box out of my hands as Cody looked on in stoned confusion. We had just been goofing around for the camera’s benefit of course, but to the viewers at home it appeared that those wacky Star Wars fans were literally fighting over the toys. The funny thing was that wasn’t too far from the truth.

In one sense the promotion had worked because the three of us became moderately interested in the actual film. A few weeks later I found myself ridiculously stoned and entering a theater to watch it. Ninety minutes or so later, I walked out and said to no one in particular, “That was the worst fucking movie I’ve ever seen.”

—Nate Gangelhoff

KISS OF DEATH

OUT NOW:

THE SOVIETTES "LP II" LP

1994 "MOST DEAF" 7"

BANGERS "SMALL PLEASURES" CD/LP

DIRTY TACTICS "THE DIVINE MIDDLE" CD/7"

COMING UP:

CAVES / SUNDIALS "SPLIT" 7"

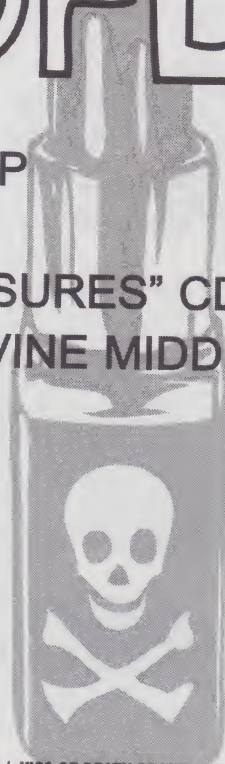
THE FAKE BOYS 7"

THE SLOW DEATH CD/LP

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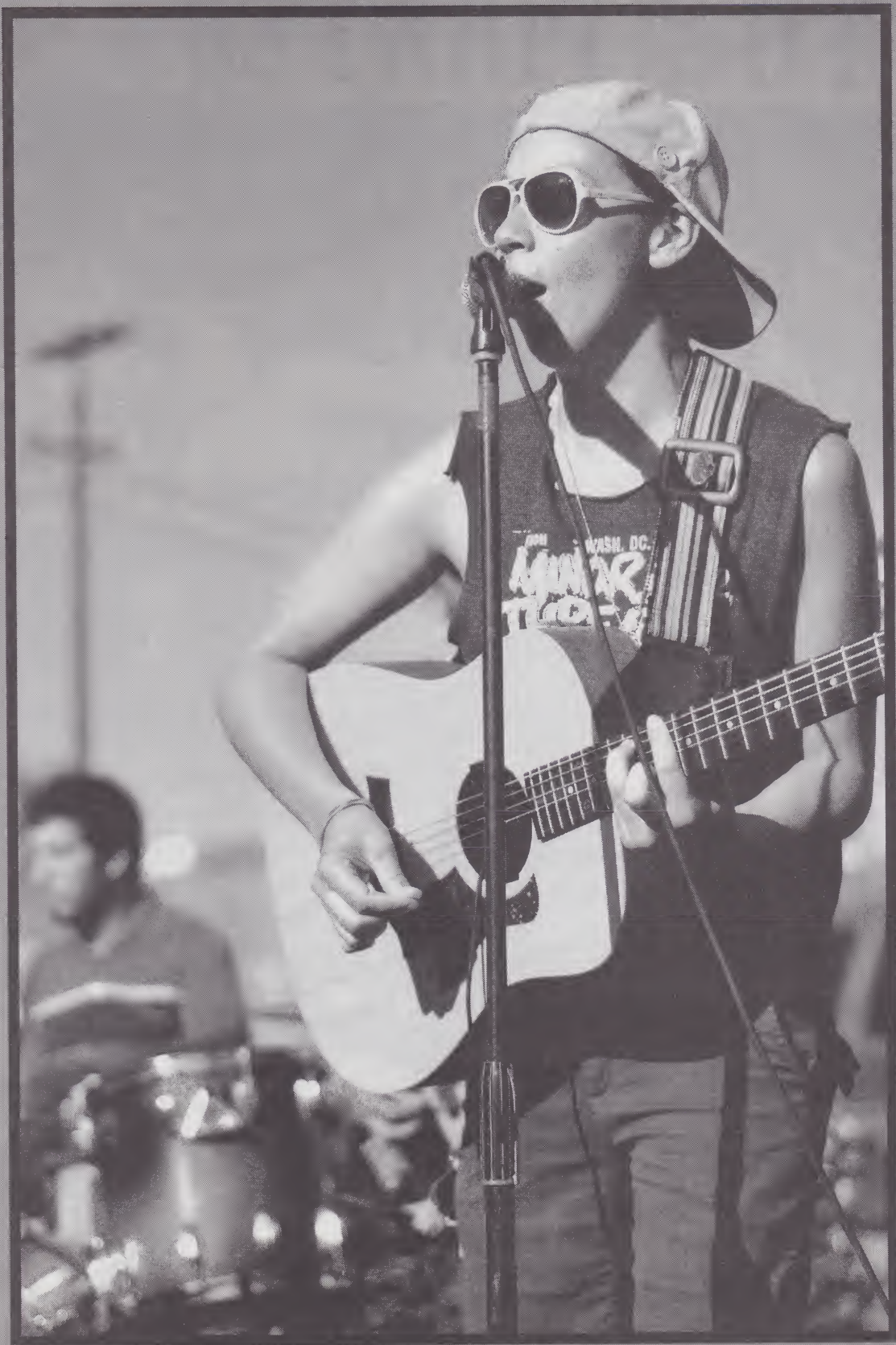


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Stoned At Heart, San Pedro, California

TUTU AND THE PIRATES



THERE WAS MUSIC BLARING.

**I WAS FRIED. PEOPLE FALLING DOWN THE STAIRS,
CHICKS HALF-NAKED, IT WAS...HEAVEN.**

CHICAGO was home to renowned garage punks like Shadows Of Knight and the Knaves in the 1960s. In the '80s the city birthed influential hardcore punks like Naked Raygun and the Effigies. To the outside world, Chicago was silent during punk rock's initial 1976-1978 explosion, but Windy City bands were making '70s noise. Among those local acts were the mysterious south side garage rock-influenced Cunts, bizarre new waver Skafish, and absurdist political punkers Silver Abuse.

Perhaps the first, and certainly the most notorious, of that initial wave of '70s bands was Tutu & The Pirates. The band formed in 1977 by two sets of childhood friends from the north suburbs. The band's members met at La Mere Vipere, a mob-run gay bar turned punk hangout (some say the first punk bar in the U.S.).

The Pirates were inspired by the burgeoning punk movement, but their influences went deeper than just the current crop of bands from New York and the U.K. They drew upon the Stooges, MC5, New York Dolls, Mothers Of Invention, Kinky Friedman, and even jazz and bossa nova. Though the gays and punks of La Mere loved them, mainstream Chicago rock fans primed for Styx and Speedwagon covers were not ready for songs like "I Got Zits," "No Head from Darlene," and "It's Hard to Get Tight with a Hermaphrodite." Their first show at B'Ginnings (a rock club in suburban Schaumburg), saw a full-on brawl between the rock crowd and the punks during the first song. Tutu & The Pirates managed to play their whole set amid flying fists and bottles.

There were no safety pins, swastika shirts, or bondage pants for the band. Instead of following trends, they created their own along the way, taking to the stage in dresses and jockstraps, utilizing plumber's gear and pornography as props, and looking hairier and scarier than any band from London or the Lower East Side. Tutu, the bear-like drummer, defied his ex-Marine/biker profile by wearing tutus and pasties. Frankie Paradise played a toilet seat bass. Despite enraging as many as they entertained, Tutu & The Pirates quickly became one of the most popular local bands in Chicago. With the help of their management Jam Productions (still one of the largest concert promoters in the country), they toured the Midwest and opened for most of the punk and new wave heavy hitters playing Chicago. The Pirates shared the stage with the Ramones, Undertones, and played before the U.S. debut of the Pretenders.

The Pirates ultimately disbanded in 1980 — after years of motorcycle injuries, frustration, and boredom — without ever having released a record. Although they frequently recorded, their status as a top live act in a large city convinced them they deserved a major record deal. No deals came with their refusal to change lyrics about serial killers, masochism, prolicide, oral sex, and acne.

After a thirty-year hiatus, the band finally saw their first release. Following an appearance in filmmaker Joe Losurdo's Chicago punk history documentary *You Weren't There*, the band assembled the 2010 LP *Sub: Urban Insult Rock for the Anti/Lectual*, a collection of demos and live songs, with the original line up reuniting to perform to a baffled, sold out crowd at Chicago's Empty Bottle.

Joe Losurdo interviewed band member's Lil' Richie Speck (vocals), Jimmy Socket (guitar), Mel Torment (guitar), Frankie Paradise (bass), Tutu (drums), Max De La Livingswing (drums) and Bubba their soundman about what it was like helping carve out Chicago's punk scene and all the flack, punches, and venereal diseases in between before getting back together thirty years later. -Jake Austen, *Roctober Magazine*



THEY HAD THIS SERVICE GUY THERE WHO SAID,
 "DON'T YOU WANT TO BE A MAN?"

I SAID "UH UH! NO.
 I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE A MAN!"

I'M WALKING AROUND IN PLATFORM
 SHOES AND SILVER PANTS.

Joe: How did you guys meet?

Richie: Tutu was riding one of the first Sting Ray bikes I'd ever seen.

Tutu: It wasn't a Sting Ray, though. I asked my dad for a Lemon Peeler and he got me some Kawasaki knockoff piece of junk.

Richie: But it was cool! We both came from families that had a lot of music going around. We both had pianos in our houses so we'd sing harmonies together, "Bye Bye Blackbird" or whatever. We sang along to records, *Hair*, or whatever.

Tutu: Or commercials! See, I was a real fat kid, like I am now, and Richie was a very mean child. He used to take songs off the radio like the Stylistics "The Closer I Get to You" and sing, "The closer I get to food."

Richie: We loved whatever was big on the radio. The Beatles, Guess Who.

Tutu: Spike Jones!

Richie: We loved Spike Jones. It was like Zappa before Zappa.

Tutu: Richie was a really good singer and he was very "artsy." He'd take me to these movies in Chicago and they would freak me out! *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble*. It

was repulsive! I was like, "What in the fuck are you taking me to?" He would take me to these erotic film festivals. I was starting to worry about him a little bit...

Richie: You were worried about me for a long time.

Tutu: Yeah, since I was seven.

Tutu: When I was about twelve, someone gave me a real garbage Sears drum kit. It didn't even have a bass drum; it just had a skin! But I invited a neighborhood girl over and I drummed for her for like thirty seconds. She said, "That thing's a piece of junk," and walked out. I've been in therapy ever since.

Frankie: Jimmy and I met in seventh grade.

Jimmy: We were in that hippie clique back in the early '70s, hanging around, smoking pot, and listening to music.

Frankie: Jimmy was already playing guitar. I played upright bass.

Jimmy: Frankie was like a nerdy, really smart guy who grew up with a family of classical and jazz musicians. His dad was a doctor and it was a more intellectual kind of atmosphere.

Frankie: That's how it looked, but that's not how it was. It looked better than it was.

Mel: We all went to New Trier West High School, except for Frankie, who went to New Trier East (alma mater of Rock Hudson, Charlton Heston, Ann Margret, and Bruce Dern). We hung around in different cliques, but we all knew each other and eventually started hanging out together.

Bubba: It all had to do with pot! That's what brought us together but we also hung out at a bar called Hugo's, which was a block away from New Trier West. We would go in there after school and drink beer.

Mel: I think Richie bartended there and he was only seventeen!

Richie: The owner thought I was older, so he let me fill in when he had to go out.

Joe: Did you guys play in bands before Tutu & The Pirates?

Tutu: I played in little garage bands here and there. The first one was called Ventilation. We played "In a Gadda Da Vida" and I couldn't drum. It was terrible. I was also in a couple of bands with Mel. Mostly covers: Humble Pie, Hot Tuna, stuff like that.

Mel: I was in a band with Tutu called Onyx.

Bubba: Onyx was basically a Paul Rodgers cover band. Mostly Bad Company songs plus "All Right Now" by Free.

Tutu: There were other New Trier bands like Purple Realm which had Jimmy in it.

Jimmy: Purple Realm was my band in junior high. We would play covers like the Doors, Stones. We played dances, bar mitzvahs. I made more money in that band than with the Pirates! We played an ultra orthodox bar mitzvah and did "Ballad of John & Yoko" but we changed the lyrics from "Christ, you know it ain't easy," to "man, you know it ain't easy." The keyboard player's mom was upset because we were so "loud," even though we were playing out of these tiny thirty-watt Kay amps. At one show she actually came up on stage and turned the amp down in the middle of a song.

Richie: I had a band in high school that lasted one gig. We were the four guys in school who wore platform shoes and had shag haircuts. We were called Thunder Thighs and did Stones, Faces, J. Geils covers. It was a total fiasco. I forgot the lyrics. The guitarist forgot chords and Cary Baker (Trouser Press) was in the audience—'cause he went to high school with us—and I overheard him say we were horrible. So that was my first review!

Joe: Tutu, you joined the Marines around that time, why?

Tutu: I was getting in a lot of trouble. I fell in with the wrong crowd. I wanted to join, but it was kind of a stupid thing to do 'cause all my friends were going to the prom and living their lives and I was in the jungle! It wasn't really where I wanted to be.

Mel: Tutu used to hang out with these juvenile delinquents and they got into trouble and the judge gave him the option of going into juvie or joining the Marines. That was common then to have that choice. Today, they just throw you in jail.

Richie: He tried to get me to fucking join! They had this service guy there who said,

"Don't you want to be a man?" I said "Uh uh! No. I have no desire to be a man!" I'm walking around in platform shoes and silver pants.

Tutu: So when I got out of the Marines, I got a bike and started hanging out with bikers. Going to bars.

Richie: And living in a trailer.

Tutu: I went from my parents beautiful condo to living in a trailer park! We had the best parties there. That's what people remember me for! They won't remember me for winning any trophies...

Richie: 'Cause you never won any!

Tutu: Yes I did! I won one in Little League.

Richie: The fattest catcher?

Tutu: Second fattest.

Joe: So the Marines didn't really straighten you out?

Tutu: No, it made me worse.

Richie: Well he could really hurt people then!

Tutu: I could protect you guys! Jimmy had the biggest mouth. One time at (famed Chicago bar) Mother's—you know Jimmy was a little effeminate looking—and he's blowing shit to this group of guys. It was like a mouse barking at a lion. He's following them into an alley. He's like a little girl yelling "Fuck You" at these hoodlums; I mean these are Chicago street thugs. I looked at the biggest one and said, "If you touch him, I'm going to kill you first" and they backed off.

Frankie: Tutu was really good at that stuff.

Jimmy: This is true. Tutu admonished me afterward: "Bass, you dumb fuck!"

Joe: So how did you get involved with music after high school?

Jimmy: At the time, Frankie and I were totally into jazz. We'd go see McCoy Tyner, Larry Coryell. So we were totally not into rock. We'd gotten past our CSNY-smoking-pot-hippie days and we would drive around to shows listening to Mahavishnu, 'cause rock music sucked back then, so jazz was what we found we liked. We both went to the American Music Conservatory, majoring in theory and composition, studying jazz and classical.

Frankie: And railing against them as well because we would do more "outside" stuff and it would make their hair stand on end.

Jimmy: It was one of the top-rated schools for music in the country and was very conservative.

Frankie: The dean of the college loved you!

Jimmy: Well, he loved...boys.

Frankie: But he was the coolest guy. He used to be in the OSS (pre-CIA intelligence agency) and had great stories.

Jimmy: He was the conductor for the Lyric Opera. He would take us to the Cliff Dwellers Club which was the private club for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Joe: So did you guys try to form a jazz band?

Frankie: No, we weren't that good! We liked theory a lot and then we liked railing against theory. Then we decided that punk rock was the right place. We thought it was very amusing—the things we would do in a song—and if you think about them now and try to play them... they're still pretty ridiculous!

Jimmy: There are fifty-seven too many chords in every one of our songs.

Ritchie: I was impressed with Jimmy's and Frankie's musicianship. They could play jazz, classical. You know, Joe Pass was Jimmy's favorite guitar player! But I think they got sick of the crowd at the conservatory and wanted to kick back a little bit.

Joe: How did you get into punk?

Jimmy: I quit the conservatory and went to Paris for a while in '76 or '77 to be a busker. When I was there, I would pick up the *NME* and *Melody Maker* and read about this whole punk thing in London. The Sex Pistols, The Clash.

Frankie: Jimmy would send me these letters ranting about this new movement going on over there and asking if I'd heard of these bands.

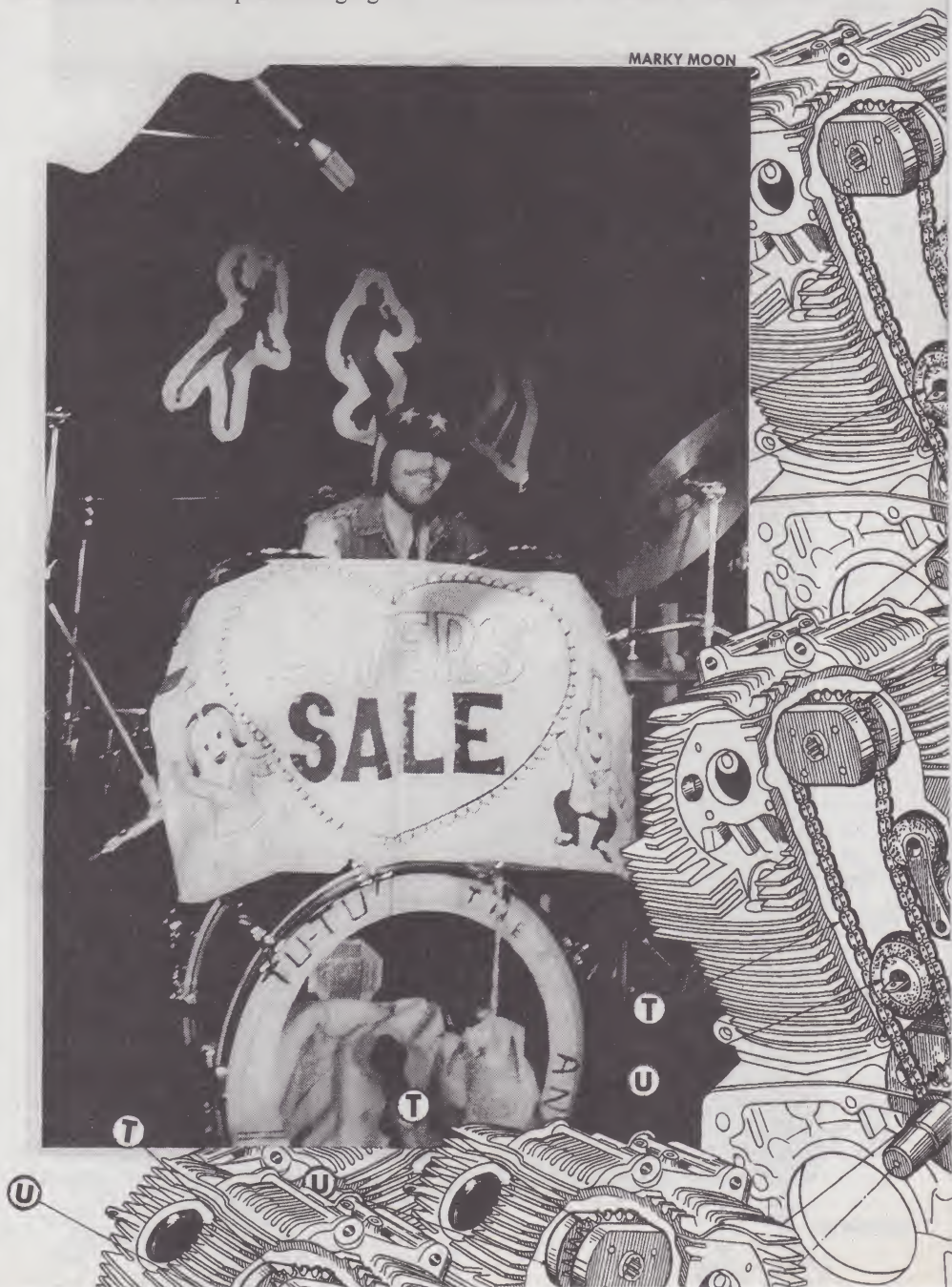
Jimmy: So I decided to come back home because I needed a hot meal and I missed my mommy. I stopped over in London first and saw all these punks hanging out.

It was everywhere. I thought it was great. On the flight home, we had a stopover in Iceland. I saw a kid with a whole stack of punk records under his arm and asked if I could look at them. So that summer we heard about the Ramones playing somewhere in Wisconsin.

Frankie: In an airplane hangar! It was great! All the people who ended up as the core La Mere people were at that show.

Jimmy: But that show did it for me. It was like seeing rock'n'roll again; the way you loved like the Kinks in the '60s, The Animals. That's when we said, "Let's start a band."

Ritchie: I was always looking for music, scouring record stores. I dropped out of high school and became a cab driver. That was a dead end so I went out to San Francisco to live with my brother Mark (Singer). My brother was a folkie, played in New Christy Minstrels, and then he went to Nam, came back, played with SF group Lamb, and sang on Van Morrison's *St. Dominic's Preview* record.



He was on the periphery of the music scene, a really talented guy but he had some problems with the "chemicals," as we say. When I was there, Warren Zevon was living with him. "Excitable Boy" was about to come out, so Zevon's record company puts him up in my brother's house to keep him clean. But my brother was a coke dealer!

So, eventually, I had to get out of there and come back to Chicago. When I got back, I saw an ad in the *Triad* radio guide about punk night on Sunday at a place called La Mere Vipere. So I went there to check it out and that was my first real exposure to punk. I thought I knew what punk rock was, but you really didn't 'cause, you know, Tom Petty wore leather on the cover of his first LP, so some people called that punk. But it still wasn't fully formed yet. They were spinning glam, Stooges, Bowie along with like maybe six punk records. I remember it was "Homicide" by 999, "New Rose" by the Damned, Sex Pistols, Ramones, Clash.

Tutu: There was music blaring. I was fried. People falling down the stairs, chicks half-naked, it was... heaven. I couldn't wait to go there at night. There was a guy covered in Saran wrap—you know, stuff you can't see in Glenview.

Frankie: It was unbelievable. Those people were weird. It was a great place. We met a lot of people. We met a whole new crowd of wacky people.

Ritchie: We got a lot of support from the La Mere scene. People seemed to be excited that a band was happening.

Jimmy: I loved it but that's when things get hazy for me 'cause I was so out of it. You guys were more into hanging out and being social and I was into just standing at the bar and trying to pick up girls. I'm still really pissed that you let me go home with that transsexual!

Frankie: Everyone did at some point! But she was gorgeous.

Jimmy: I remember you guys egging me on and giggling. But I realized it was a guy when we got back to my parents' house and we turned the car right back around!

Joe: Tutu, how did a suburban rock guy/biker like you adjust to hanging out in a gay bar?

Tutu: I liked them all! I was friends with most of them. They'd come up and squeeze my ass and I'd say, "Knock it off!" But it didn't bother me one bit. They were great guys. We'd go to their parties, but you had to be real careful who you picked up 'cause you weren't sure whether it was a real girl or not. One we were friends with was named Reagan and she was beautiful! I mean it was close until someone came up to me and said, "Tutu, you don't want that." I didn't know! Tequila can hide a lot of things.

Joe: So you guys were partying pretty hard at this point.

Tutu: Quaaludes, angel dust, MDA, coke, acid, mescaline, hash, etcetera.

Ritchie: I think the whole band collectively had everything pretty well covered. Well, not too much coke. It was a hundred dollars a



KATHY KONAS / 1979



KATHY KONAS / 1980

gram, and back then you could buy a car for fifty dollars!

Joe: So how did you guys come together as a band?

Ritchie: I ran into Frankie at a party and I was singing him some of the dirty C&W songs I had been writing in California. And he goes, "You know that's great what you're doing, but we're thinking of starting a punk rock band." So I got together with him and Jimmy.

Jimmy: We auditioned him in my bedroom at my parents' house. He just started singing with no mic or anything. He had no inhibitions whatsoever. We said, "You're in. Do you know any other guys?"

Frankie: So Richie brought in Mel and his Tutu.

technical breakdowns all the time. But he's a rock solid rhythm guitarist and we really needed that.

Joe: So you guys were all on board to be a punk band?

Frankie: We knew what were doing in the beginning and that's probably the only time we knew what we were doing.

Tutu: I loved it. Sex Pistols, Ramones. If it had a heavy metal backbeat, I loved it. Take away the vocals from the Sex Pistols and it's pretty heavy!

Jimmy: Tutu wanted to be in some heavy metal band. You know, he was an ex-biker and a Marine.

Frankie: He didn't get it right away but he was just thrilled to be in a band and he loved being Tutu.

Darlene" and "Ecstasy in a Painted Van.." Richie wrote stuff like "Son of Sam," which is great. I wasn't that good a lyricist and eventually it was just Frankie and Richie for the most part.

Mel: We had a song called "The Schnizz." When Frankie was a kid, his brother told him about a sex act called the Schnizz, which was having oral sex with a girl when she was having her period. So we made it into a song. It started out as a bossa nova. We kept adding parts to it until it was eight minutes long. "A fragrance of Caesarian, or maybe it's the steel mills in Gary / I hope she's not miscarrying / Let's Schnizz!"

Joe: What was it like in 1977 when you first played?

Richie: We rehearsed at least six nights a week for like, eight hours a night so we were

WE WERE SUPPOSED TO PLAY THREE SETS, BUT THE GUY WHO RAN THE CLUB ACTUALLY PAID US TO NOT PLAY THE THIRD SET. THAT HAPPENED A COUPLE OF TIMES.

Joe: What did you think of Tutu?

Frankie: We thought he was insane, 'cause he is! But he is so fucking entertaining and we thought he fit the bill perfectly.

Mel: He was always a character, always had something up his sleeve. He grew up with four sisters and his grandmother lived with his family: a house full of women. So he learned women at a very early age.

Frankie: Tutu's drumming was erratic but he did great with the shit that he did. After a while, we knew what he was going to do musically so we could follow him. He was consistent with his inconsistencies.

Jimmy: Frankie and I came from this very structured, intense classical theory training—practicing fucking scales—and with Tutu it was almost a relief from all that stuff. It was like, "Fuck that shit!"

Joe: Tutu has said you guys yelled at him a lot on stage.

Frankie: We yelled but he didn't listen! It was sheer wills against each other, but it was a chronic condition. It was all the time.

Jimmy: But Frankie was obsessed with timing being perfect and with Tutu it wasn't gonna happen.

Joe: What did you think about Mel?

Frankie: Mel is a great fucking rhythm guitarist and he never forgets anything. Over thirty years later, he remembers everything. It's scary.

Jimmy: Mel is maybe not the best musician in the group, but he is by far the most important because he went to DeVry Tech! And without Mel, half the gigs wouldn't have happened 'cause we would have

Tutu: A lot of my friends gave me grief for playing in a punk band and when they saw us play, they *really* hated it. But they came anyway.

Joe: So did you have a sound in mind when you first got together or were you just throwing songs out there?

Frankie: I think we just threw 'em out there and the rawer they were—with the little bit of twist of amusement in them—the more we approved of them.

Jimmy: Because of our background, we would throw in a diminished chord in there or a different time signature or a weird scale to keep us amused.

Frankie: So we would make these terrible musical beds and Richie would somehow find a melody that worked over it. He would always find a way to make it work.

Joe: I hear a Zappa influence.

Jimmy: Not really, although my first rock concert was the Mothers Of Invention in 1968 at Ravinia.

Frankie: Wait a minute. We saw Zappa like fifteen times together.

Jimmy: I was into the Stones, Bowie, Lou Reed. After seeing the Ramones the first time, I went right back into my old Kinks, Stones, and early Beatles records.

Mel: There was a lot of pre-punk influence like the Stooges, New York Dolls, Bowie, Alice Cooper.

Joe: So who wrote lyrics?

Jimmy: We all did. Frankie and I would get together on Sunday mornings at this coffee shop and be all hungover and come up with lines to songs. We wrote "No Head from

growing like crazy, getting better exponentially from the first time we got together in June '77 to the first shows in October.

Mel: We practiced in the basement of Tutu's parents' condo and in that first month we had thirty or forty songs already. We eventually got our own space in a loft in Chicago we called "Tutu's Placenta."

Richie: It was 4453 W. Fullerton, which was no man's land in those days. It was a big loft with machine shops on either side. We'd get there at three in the afternoon and practice till ten, eleven PM then go to La Mere afterwards. We also did gigs and rent parties there. We'd sell beer. Chicago was a different place then. The cops would come by but they wouldn't really bother you. There were bars around the Placenta but we *never* went there 'cause every night there was someone getting stabbed and falling onto the sidewalk. And that was the North side!

Mel: There was one show at the Placenta where the cops showed up to close it down. Sponge sent his biker girlfriend to "take care" of the cops and the show went on!

Bubba: The city that works!

Mel: Our buddies Pistol Whip lived at the Placenta for a while when they moved here from Erie, PA. That place would get so disgusting after a while—rotting food, bugs—so we decided we'd all go in and clean it up. Tutu got there first and when we showed up, he had all these twelve and thirteen-year-old neighborhood girls cleaning the Placenta!

Richie: Our very first Tutu gig was at Kendall College in Evanston. This was

WE'D BE DOING OUR SOUNDHECK AND THERE'D BE A TRANNY
WITH A FIVE O'CLOCK SHADOW WHO LOOKED LIKE ALICE COOPER
GIVING DOUBLE HAND JOBS TO TWO SAILORS!



SAILORS! NOT GUYS DRESSED UP AS SAILORS.
THESE GUYS WERE IN THE NAVY!

before it was a cooking school. It was a community college then. They had some law enforcement program there that, for some reason, was popular with these Iranian immigrants who lived in the dorms. So the majority of the audience was young Iranian men who couldn't really speak English. We got really high before we went on because we were so nervous. I forgot the lyrics, Jimmy's cord got unplugged. It was a thirty-minute set, but seemed like we were up there for a year and a half.

Richie: Our second show was at a loft called the Piss Factory. It was our first show in front of the punk crowd, which basically was the La Mere crowd, and they loved it right from the minute we stepped out there. We dressed the part, we played hard, and it was funny and loose and nasty and that was what everyone was hoping for. From that point on we always drew a good crowd in Chicago.

You see, there was La Mere, but no local bands playing punk. So when we stepped out there in front of these people who wanted

this so badly 'cause there was nobody in town giving it to them, we knew it was going to work. It did for quite a while. We opened with "No Head from Darlene" and Jimmy and Frankie were both playing basses and I had one strung around my neck and people were like, "Oh my god! Three basses!" and we knew at least we could get their attention.

Jimmy: Back then, we would just walk into a club and meet with the owner and pitch our band to them.

Frankie: And people actually answered phones back then, too.

Richie: Frankie was really in charge of a lot of stuff—booking shows, making calls, getting the band to be tighter. He did a great job.

Bubba: Frankie definitely dictated a lot of what the band was gonna do.

Richie: We played at a place called Huey's on a Monday night and packed the place, so the owners decided to make Mondays "punk" night and brought in bands like the Stranglers and the Misfits. We would play there once or

twice a month after that as a semi-regular gig. We'd play in Cicero, Joliet, wherever we could get a gig.

Joe: What was the reaction in some of these places in the 'burbs?

Richie: Violent. Really, really violent. The B'ginnings (suburban rock club owned by Chicago drummer Danny Seraphine) show was kind of the culmination of that whole thing. I think there was already a vibe out there that you could come to a punk show and abuse the band and audience.

Bubba: People were throwing glass beer mugs as hard as they could at their heads! Jimmy was hiding behind the PA. When I went back to their dressing room after the set, every one of them was bleeding somewhere. If you played places like that, you had better do REO Speedwagon covers or you'd get booed off the stage.

Tutu: That's why I started wearing helmets on stage.

Richie: That was not uncommon and we'd actually be disappointed if a show didn't end

that way, unless we were playing in front of our own crowd.

Jimmy: Our crowd was pretty much the gays and the punks. And those shows were wild and fucking great. The gay community back then was always five years ahead of everybody else.

Frankie: The gay scene in the late '70s was great. Now it's turned into this middle class movement that is depressing. In those days, those guys knew how to have so much fucking fun and they couldn't have been nicer.

Jimmy: And then when the college kids got into us, the gays dropped us 'cause we weren't cool anymore!

Tutu: The second show at B'Ginnings, we had our crowd in the middle of the floor and on the sides were the jocks and the suburban rockers. The place was packed. We came out with Frankie and Richie in robes, dragging giant crosses as I was whipping them with a sump pump hose, all to the sound of "Dominique" by the Singing Nun blasting out of the speakers.

Mel: Sometimes people would jump on stage, but our roadie Sponge would take care of them. He was a biker, too.

Bubba: Most of the time, it was Tutu fans jumping on stage and Sponge would still floor them!

Mel: He was like our Hell's Angel at Altamont!

Jimmy: The one and only time my family saw us play was at Mother's on Division Street in Chicago. All my aunts, cousins, mother, sister—all women—were there. We used to open with "Goldfinger." Ritchie came out on stage wearing a trench coat and sunglasses, looking like a secret agent. Somewhere in the middle of the song he flung open the coat and he had this huge, three-foot-long dildo sticking out of his shorts. We never knew what he was going to do from gig to gig. All the gay guys and transvestites started screaming, rushing the stage. I immediately looked out at the spot where my whole family was standing. Every single one of them dropped their jaws in unison, eyes bulging, gaping at the frenzy of it all. Needless to say, Christmas dinner really sucked that year.

Mel: All the schtick stuff came out of our personalities. We were like that before we were ever in a band.

Bubba: We played this bizarre place in Wisconsin, between Lake Geneva and Kenosha called the Hooker Lake Inn. The stage was on the second floor, but they did have an elevator. The night we played there happened to be "free beer" night. It was mostly bikers. You'd pay four bucks to get in and they had a keg in the middle of the floor. By the end of the first set, everybody was getting blasted. Every paying customer in that club hated Tutu & The Pirates. Guys were trying to unplug cables from the mixing board. Mel was wearing Dr. Denton's pajamas and had a giant dildo packed in his pants.

Mel: Back then, rock musicians would wear these one-piece jumpsuits, so that's why I started wearing these Dr. Denton pajamas. It was our answer to the one-piece jumpsuit.

All those guys who would wear those outfits would pack to make them look more endowed! So I took a tube sock and wrapped it in duct tape.

Bubba: One of the bikers came up to me and asked, "What's with that guy? Is he some kinda faggot?" I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." "Yeah, look at that! Any guy with a dick that big has got to be a faggot!"

Mel: We were supposed to play three sets, but the guy who ran the club actually paid us to not play the third set. That happened a couple of times. We played this one place called Monopoly in the suburbs. We were supposed to play a fifty-minute set, but the club owner insisted we play an hour. So we stopped in the middle of our set and had shrimp cocktails for ten minutes!

Jimmy: A lot of the clubs we played were mob owned. We would play at Mother's a lot. We were practically the house band there and we'd be getting ready to leave the club at two or three AM and that's when the mobsters would show up with their floozy girlfriends with big hair, jewels, and fur coats. They'd say, "Come on over, boys and have a drink!" and we'd say, "Yes, sir." It was very *Sopranos* and *Goodfellas*. The bunnies from the Playboy Club would show up.

Frankie: That was depressing 'cause you always thought a Playboy bunny was a certain thing, but when they just drank a six-pack and were belching and shit, it wasn't the same. Their tails falling off...

Jimmy: Denny's waitresses with the bunny suit on. We actually recorded one of our last demos at a studio in the Playboy Club in Lake Geneva.

Joe: What did other bands think of you guys?

Mel: The scene around Chicago at that time were bands like The Boyzz From Illinoize, Off Broadway. Most of the bands were cover bands playing Foreigner, Styx, REO, and whatever pop stuff.

Richie: They hated us. Musicians really resented us. We opened up for everyone who came through Chicago at the time—the Pretenders, Undertones, and *they* all hated us. This band The Boyfriends from New York told us we were "non-musical."

Tutu: Off Broadway wanted to have a battle of the bands with us on their turf, which would be the suburbs.

Richie: When we played with Fred "Sonic" Smith, he was actually really encouraging and supportive. And the Ramones were great guys. When we opened for them the first time, Frankie broke a string on his bass on our first song and quickly switched basses and broke another string. So Dee Dee let him use his bass, and when he put it on, it dropped down to Frankie's knee level!

Mel: Dee Dee would actually come out and party with us downtown.

Tutu: The Romantics backed us up a couple of times.

Joe: They hated you, too?

Tutu: No, I hated them!

Mel: We opened for the Troggs once.

Bubba: They had to borrow all our gear. They opened with "Wild Thing," closed with "Wild Thing" and the third song of their encore was, you guessed it, "Wild Thing!"

Joe: What happened with the Undertones?

Richie: We opened up for them at the Park West and we killed. The crowd loved it. Then the Undertones come on stage and the first thing out of Feargal Sharkey's mouth is "We apologize for the opening band. We didn't pick them." So I waited for him after the show to kick his ass and they surrounded him to escort him out. I heard he might join the House of Lords.

Richie: Yeah, well he can go fuck himself still. All the bands from the U.K. we played with were awful, awful people. Nasty, cold people who would do whatever they could to fuck with you.

Joe: So when did you start playing out of town?

Richie: As soon as we could. One of the first places we played was Bookies in Detroit. In the daytime it was a transvestite bar. We'd be doing our soundcheck and there'd be a tranny with a five o'clock shadow who looked like Alice Cooper giving double hand jobs to two sailors! Sailors! Not guys dressed up as sailors. These guys were in the Navy! And the owner of the bar had a tracheotomy, so he'd talk to with the talk box.

Frankie: Detroit was special. They had a great scene there.

Tutu: We packed the house in Detroit once because everyone thought we were the Stones playing under an assumed name. But they all stayed and loved the show.

Jimmy: And Richie announced on the mic that we were staying at the motel down the street and everybody should come by and party. And they did! The whole crowd was packed into four rooms at this motel. It was even too crowded to score, so Tutu and I left and went to another hotel to get some sleep. We found a place that advertised "Adult Movies," and said "Let's stay there!" But we had to share a bed, so Tutu said, "Bass, if you touch me, I swear I'll kill you." So, of course, I start touching his leg to annoy him.

Joe: So you never made it out to the coasts?

Tutu: No, it was all Midwest stuff: Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, lots of college towns.

Frankie: The college towns we would do pretty good in because the kids who would bring us in knew about us and would promote the shows. We played to 1,200 kids in Champaign.

Joe: Eric Nihilist (Chicago punk promoter) told me that when you played the Catholic girls college Barrett, the nuns were completely appalled, but they admitted that the Tutu show made them more money than any other event they had ever held.

Richie: Jim Sohns (Shadows Of Knight) was doing sound for us at the time and he came out and did "Gloria" for our encore. That was the most memorable part of the show, except that I got the clap that night.

Mel: I came out clean.

Richie: If you didn't hook up that night, you were never gonna hook up!

11TH ANNUAL KC GREASERAMA

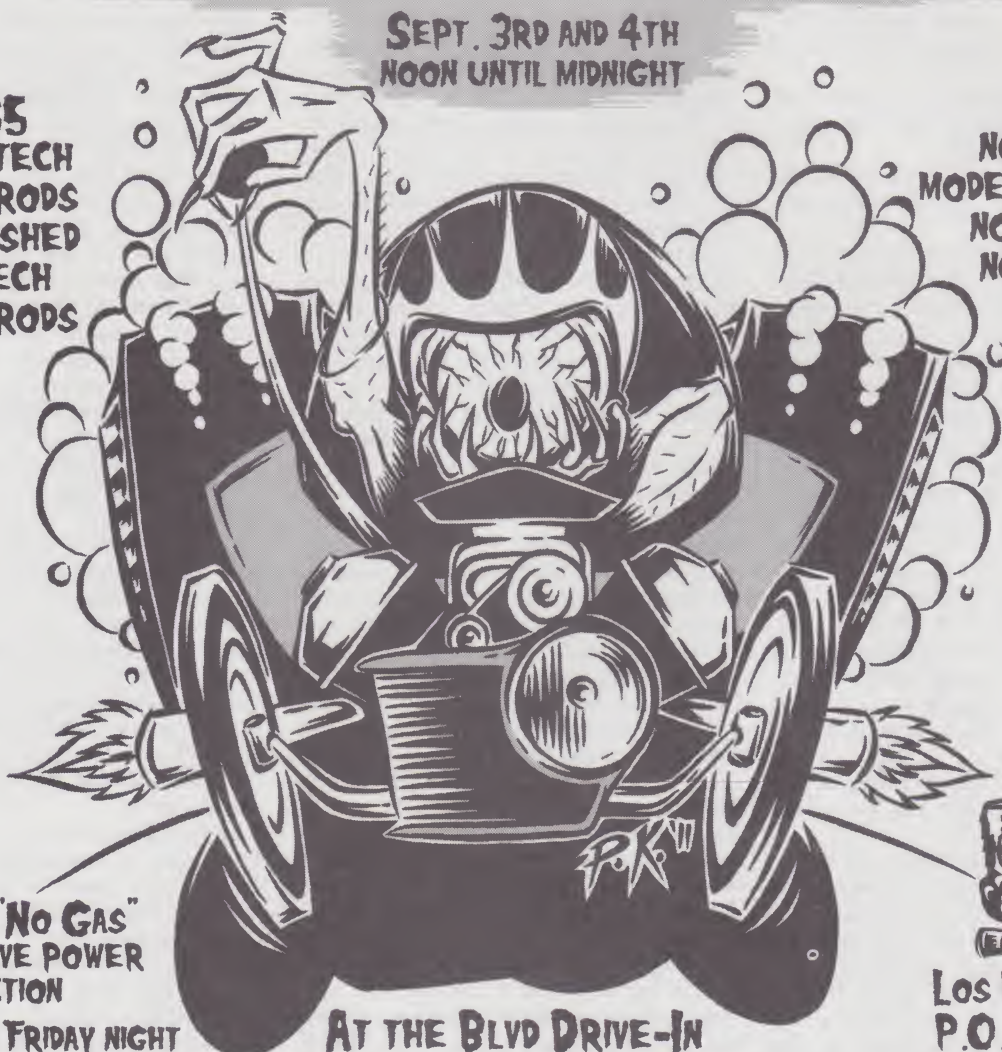
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THAT.**

★ **TuTu and the Pirates** ★
(speed up for animals)



Bubba: Jim owned the PA, so you had to play "Gloria."

Joe: So Tutu, what happened when you quit playing with the band?

Tutu: I had a bad crash on my bike and broke my collarbone, cracked my arm and ribs. I got hurt pretty bad and then I started having problems with my legs.

Richie: Even though we had our new drummer, Abner Normal, Tutu would still sit on the stage and read porno mags while we played.

Tutu: I'd sing back ups, too.

Richie: I think we found Abner through Frankie. Frankie and Jimmy both have older brothers who are session drummers and somehow knew him. Abner was the son of Chicago TV legend Frazier Thomas, host of *Bozo's Circus* and other shows. Great guy and great drummer. He was a classically trained percussionist and we started to take advantage of that, for better or worse.

Frankie: It was a pleasure to play with Abner 'cause he was so good.

Mel: Abner was like a living metronome. Plus he could play any style of music.

Richie: We started getting more popular, but it was really weird. Musically, it got more complicated. Lyrically, it was still nasty as ever, so how this was ever going to work out, I don't know. It was like we were cutting our own throats as we were trying to take these steps forward musically. The lyrics never got less pornographic.

Mel: Our last show with Abner, we played the Grand Prize Game from the *Bozo* show on stage.

Bubba: And Abner hit Bucket No. 6!

Joe: Did you guys really think that the punk thing was going to blow up and you were going to make it?

Richie: Yeah, we really thought—because of our nominal success in the clubs and it kind of ballooned for a while—we would all be rich guys in a couple of years.

Mel: We were packing places like Tuts and Mother's. There'd be lines down the street. We broke many clubs' attendance records and if we didn't, we usually broke the bar receipts records 'cause our fans were drinkers. So that made it easy for us to get bookings. Between rehearsal and playing shows, we were playing forty to fifty hours a week. From the moment you woke up to the moment you went to sleep, we were Tutu & The Pirates. It was our whole lives. We didn't do anything else.

Joe: You thought "It's Hard to Get Tight with a Hermaphrodite" was going to be your ticket to stardom?

Richie: I deluded myself to believe that. I can't speak for everybody.

Mel: I told my mom I was gonna buy her a big house with a pool in California. We were hell bent on success.

Tutu: I thought we were going to make it big until we had a meeting with Columbia Records. I had a connection there through my dad. They said the lyrics were too offensive. They wanted us to change the lyrics. We didn't change anything.

Frankie: They weren't going to sign us anyway.

Richie: I think they were already looking beyond punk, much less a band from Chicago.

Jimmy: The labels were all based on the coasts and were too fucking lazy to come to Chicago. I brought our demo to my Uncle Ralph (Bass, famed R&B producer/A&R guy, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductee) at Chess Records and he was like "Baby, there's nothing I can do with this!" He didn't listen to any white music at all.

Frankie: Your uncle didn't want to get caught up with our bullshit and I don't blame him.

Richie: We didn't want to relinquish control 'cause we were smarter than everybody else. We didn't know. We just thought everyone was out there to rip us off. Plus, we had done pretty good on our own. It got us laid a lot—and free drugs and free drinks.

Joe: Did you guys ever get any kind of radio airplay?

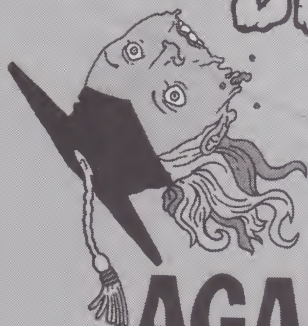
Frankie: No, except like WZRD. Terry Nelson would play us.

Jimmy: Bobby Skafish at WXRT would play us a little bit.

Mel: When the pope died, we changed our song "Do the Twitch" to "Do the Pope" and you would fall to the ground and play dead. Terri Hemmert from WXRT was in the crowd that night and the next day on the radio she said we were the most tasteless thing she'd ever seen in her life.

Richie: Steve Dahl was a big DJ at the Loop (WLUP) and we hated his fucking guts 'cause he didn't give a shit about any local bands and he ripped off a lot of our schtick. We convinced the owners of Mother's to make "disco sucks" napkins and matchbooks way before Disco Demolition and they were

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OF CONFORMITY

STRIKE

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ANYWHERE

THEIR HEADS

DEAR LANDLORD

VICTIMS

DEAD TO ME

DOPAMINES

IRON
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SCREAMING
FEMALES



DRY SPELL

MAGREUDERGRIND

NIGHT
BIRDS

THE *CATALYST

CAPSULE

ALSO FEATURING

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MAX LEVINE ENSEMBLE . TUBERS

MIKEY ERG . BIG EYES . LITTLE OZZY

WORN IN RED . THE HAVERCHUCKS

SEXY CRIMES . GROWN ASS MEN

AND FRIDAY FIELD DAY COMPETITION



right across the street from Faces, the big disco where you'd see guys dressed like John Travolta.

Tutu: Steve Dahl claimed he never heard of us, but I saw his fat ass in the crowd at several shows and, all of a sudden, he's doing songs very similar to ours.

Richie: And after a while people were comparing us to him.

Joe: You guys recorded at least five studio demos, so how come you never managed to put out a record?

Richie: We could never agree on anything.

Frankie: We never liked any of the shit we recorded enough to say, "Let's put that out on vinyl." And I think it was a pride thing. We wanted to be on a label.

Jimmy: They were just demos to submit to record labels. I don't think we ever discussed putting it out ourselves.

Mel: We were so highly critical of ourselves. Nothing we recorded sounded good enough. It was either too loose and sloppy or so tight and precise. It had no life in it anymore.

Joe: Judging by some of the later demos and live recordings, it seemed like you guys were trying to make a conscious effort to polish up your sound.

Frankie: It sounded slicker because Abner played better, so we thought we should be more slick. Big mistake.

Jimmy: But there's two ways of looking at it. Because Abner could play jazz, calypso, and bossa nova, or whatever, we would throw in these little bits, which stayed more true to what we were about: amusing ourselves. After a year or so, Abner quit.

Mel: We had a friend of my brother's fill in on drums for a couple shows. He was called Reverend Ned. It didn't quite click with the Rev, although he was a great drummer. So we held more auditions. Harry Rushakoff (Concrete Blonde) auditioned and he was a great guy and a great drummer. We knew him from La Mere days, but it still didn't quite click. So this next guy comes in, an art student from Cleveland. He's this scrawny little guy with glasses. He starts beating the shit out of these drums! We were like, "Who the fuck is this guy?" Well, that guy was Max. Needless to say he was in.

Max: I had moved to Chicago to go to film school at Columbia College. You couldn't pick up a Chicago entertainment mag at the time without reading about The Pirates. So I went to see them and got knocked out. Front man, Little Richie Speck killed me with his power, grit, but mostly stage presence and charisma. I quickly noticed the band played with more sophistication than the punk rock I'd been drawn to. I was a teacher's assistant for the filmmaker Dan Dinello. He needed a punk band for a film he was working on called *Rock Lobster*, so I took him to see Tutu & The Pirates. They announced they needed a drummer on stage, so I put my name in. One thing led to another and I joined The Pirates.

Mel: We ended up not playing any of our own songs in the movie. Dan Dinello had this vision for the movie, so we just went along with it. We did a version of the Bee Gees "Staying Alive" called "Boiled Alive," "Killing An Arab" by the Cure. We did the Devo version of "My Girl" and I sang it!

Richie: We got Max on drums, and we brought in Buddha on keys, and had some girl backup singers, and then it just got... I don't know... we spent all this time on making this thing good and then it just wasn't good anymore.

Jimmy: That's when it got bad. We thought we should really go for a record deal, "mainstream" it, get some Cars-like harmonies, keyboards.

Mel: All of a sudden, we were doing "I Got Zits" with three part harmonies!

Frankie: We should have at least listened to the result and said, "That sucks!"

Richie: Yeah, but the lyrics were as obnoxious as ever. At that point it was like smut for smut's sake. It wasn't clever anymore.

Mel: We got tired of telling the same joke over and over again.

Richie: Jam Productions took a chance with us for a while, put some money into us, and gave us some good opening slots. They wanted us to dress better—things like that—which was kind of like the kiss of death for us, but it was reality. The floor had dropped out from under us as far as the punk scene was concerned. La Mere was gone. O'Banions was nothing like La Mere.

Frankie: We were their first act Jam signed. They were trying to manage us, but they didn't really know what to do with us and they never put together anything substantial. It was always in the making. They had us make this demo at the Playboy Club and they didn't know what to do with that either.

Mel: They didn't know how to market us and eventually lost interest.

Joe: Was there a conflict within the band on this direction?

Richie: Sure, but I'm not going to point any fingers 'cause it was all of us at different times. Plus, we were doing way too many drugs at that time. We still didn't have a record out. My mind was still in 1977, but it was 1979, '80. That doesn't seem like anything now, but the way things were going it was like a century.

Frankie: We were into deep debauchery. I think it was affecting our choice making. A lot of things were being affected. It was being done in bad taste instead of good form.

Jimmy: It was getting out of control with "stimuli." It was getting awkward and uncomfortable and not fun anymore. After three or four years, I think it went as far as it could go.

Frankie: It did. We weren't doing anything anyway. We weren't working in the same way we had been. And then these guys decided they were gonna be the Sharks, so...

Richie: My feeling was—and a couple others in the band—that if we're going to try to play a more commercial, or at least accessible, music then we have to abandon this whole thing and start new. So that's what we decided to do and we lost two members: Frankie and Buddha. That's when we formed the Sharks with me, Mel, Jimmy, Max, and Dan Hamilton on bass.

Jimmy: But all the subsequent bands that we were in *sucked*. The best stuff we did was the early Pirates stuff.

Tutu: After the band, I ended up working for my dad's plumbing business but I still played music. I've played with a ton of bands. I used to be a rent-a-drummer and a lead vocalist. I moved around a lot, to Florida, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Minnesota. Then my wife and I ended up in Georgia, where I became a cop. I think I was stoned one night watching *Walking Tall* and decided I wanted to be a cop. I cut my hair off, went through the police academy, and no one would hire a Yankee. It was still the Civil War down there. Finally, I got in with one of the counties and worked there for ten years. I became an investigator, busting meth labs and drug dealers! Now I've got my own business, but I still play drums and I help out kids who can't afford instruments or lessons down there.

Frankie: I spent twenty some years putting together music for commercials, first for other jingle houses and then for myself. I also did a stint that almost killed me in B.B. Spin, but if you want to forget that I'll be glad to. I've been married for twenty-five years.

Jimmy: Married with children in the suburbs. I don't play enough golf, down to once a day.

Joe: So what was it like to have the reunion?

Tutu: It was incredible. After thirty years, when I came onstage, the whole crowd moved up.

Richie: That's because you came out of the audience. There was a lot more room to move around!

Tutu: It was such a good feeling at that show. The feeling from the crowd and the camaraderie was just tremendous. I've had so many people comment to me that it sounded just like it did in the '70s. Anytime they want me in, I'm here. It's nice to be back.

Richie: We spent so much time together and went through so much stuff together. We were closer than family. And when we got together to practice for the gig, it was amazing how much was still there.

Jimmy: It was a blast!

For more info on Tutu & The Pirates (as well as some great video footage) and the early Chicago Punk scene, check out the documentary DVD *You Weren't There: A History of Chicago Punk 1977-1984* also available from Regressive Films/Factory 25.



THE FOUND FOOTAGE

McDonald's Training Video

"Videos can be entertaining
in ways they were never intended to be."

FESTIVAL

Zsa Zsa Aerobics Video

Interview with Nick
Prueher and Joe Pickett

Before the days of YouTube, unusual video footage was generally acquired by either tape trading or ordering mix tapes from people who collected videos. Sources such as these were a peephole into a bizarre world where obsessed Steve Vai fans blow out candles with their vaginas, politicians commit suicide in front of news cameras, and men air drum to Metallica. On the front lines of tape trading and third generation film copies are VHS hunters like Joe Pickett and Nick Prueher. Pickett and Prueher are VHS enthusiasts who have turned the act of video sharing into a full-blown program that has filled independent movie houses across the country for years. The Found Footage Festival has produced five videos of shows where the two present a cornucopia of strange footage found in thrift stores and acquired by occasionally dubious methods.

**By Billups Allen
Layout by Daryl**

**Screenshots courtesy of
Found Footage Festival**

Billups: I am really pleased at how the show has grown. When you watch the first DVD, it seems like a respectable — but small — crowd. Now you are doing two shows a night in some cities.

Nick: We did about seventy-five dates last year and we have about a hundred this year. It started out fairly modest and now we're on the road nine months out of the year.

Billups: You have mentioned in the show that the two of you grew up together.

Nick: Joe and I met in sixth grade. We met in middle school in Stoughton, a small town in Wisconsin outside of Madison. We quickly bonded over our appreciation of things that are so bad they are good.

Billups: Were you involved or interested in any other DIY pursuits? Was there a punk scene in Stoughton or a group of people you hung out with who had similar or collector-centric interests?

Joe: Stoughton is a small town, so it was important to find ways to entertain myself instead of succumbing to the booze and drugs that typically satisfy boredom in small towns. Nick and I started a humor magazine in sixth grade called *The Daily Chimp*; the word "humor" might be a little strong. Then in high school, we got obsessed with making prank phone calls and started recording and selling the cassettes to classmates. I remember we actually made around forty dollars on them, which was when we realized that we could actually make money doing fun stuff.

Billups: Do either of you collect anything besides videos?

Joe: I've always loved collecting shit. When I was a kid it was the usual stuff—baseball cards, Garbage Pail Kids, etcetera. As a frequenter of thrift stores now, I find myself collecting answering machine tapes and old remote controls. Both of those things are nearly obsolete. Plus answering machine tapes can be pretty awesome.

Billups: Was thrift shopping a significant activity before your interest in videos?

Joe: I've always loved thrift stores. I used to go to garage sales with my mom all the time. She always liked old, weird stuff and I guess she passed that onto me.

Nick: We had been thrift store junkies already, so we thought we'd watch out for videotapes as well. The collection just grew and grew. Garage sales. Thrift stores. Work places. We had fourteen years of material to choose from when we did our first show. When we began touring, we started stopping in thrift stores in other places and people started bringing videos and it grew. Like all good things, it grew out of being bored.

Billups: Was Stoughton a good place to shop? Lots of thrift stores, perhaps?

Joe: Yeah. We had a great store there called Wayne's Bargain Store. The owner, Wayne, was this mean old man who hated kids, but he had the coolest shit that kids loved. Whips, nunchucks, ninja boots, rugs with naked ladies on them. I think it was at Wayne's where Nick and I realized we shared a common bond.

Nick: In terms of us realizing we had similar sensibilities was in sixth grade when everybody loved this syndicated TV show called *Small Wonder* and we couldn't believe how bad the show was. We would watch it and make fun of it. We realized we didn't excel at anything in school except having an advanced sense of irony.

Billups: What are some other sources you have explored to acquire a video?

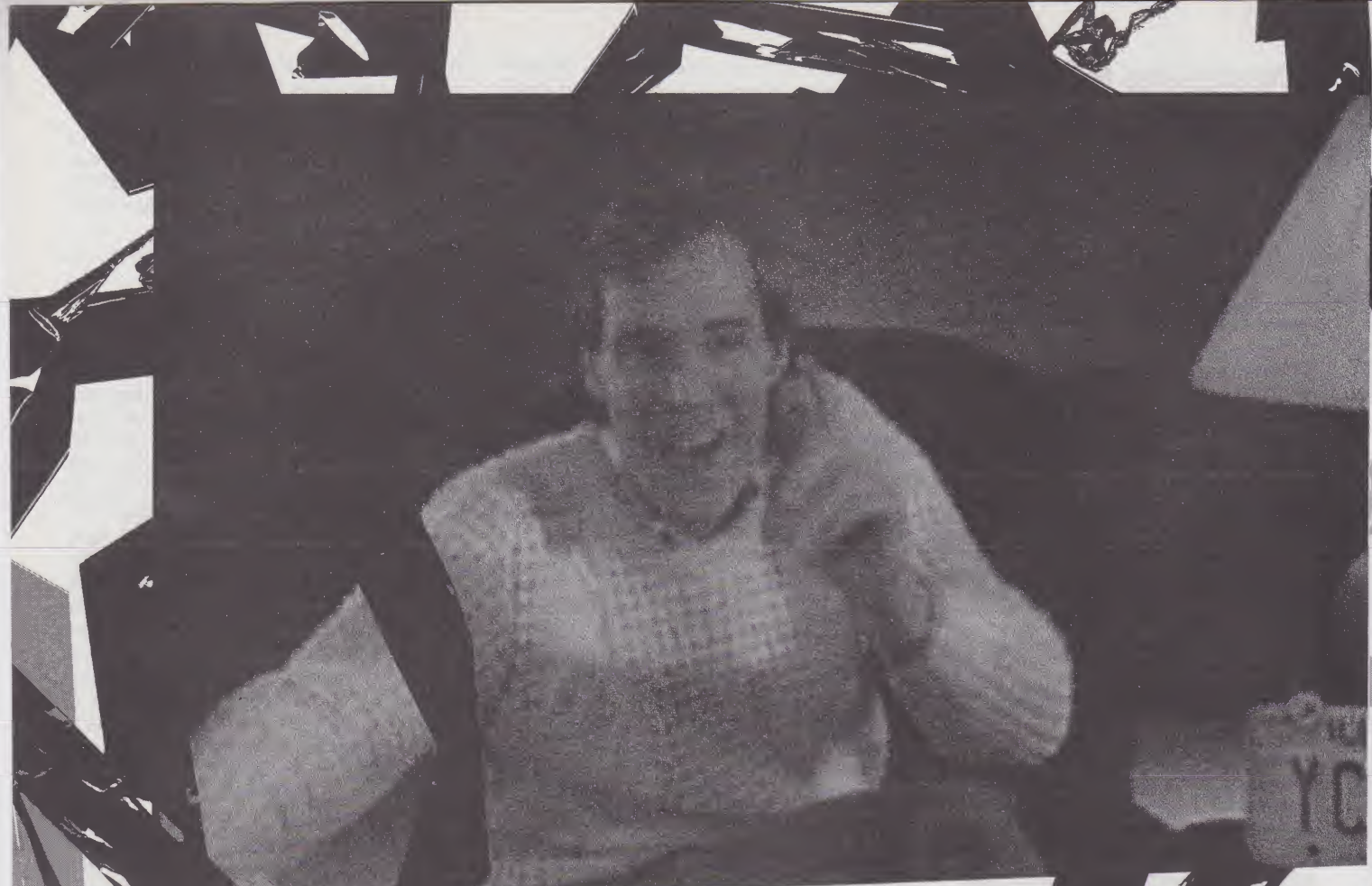
Nick: When I was a freshman in high school I worked at a McDonalds. I found a video there called *Inside and Outside Custodial Duties*. It was a training video for janitors at McDonalds. They make you sit through this video where they try to be cute and funny and try to entertain you. It's like, "Just give me the information. Don't try to patronize me with plots." My jaw dropped. My first thought was, "You know who would appreciate this? Joe." So I put it in my backpack that night and showed it to Joe. We fell in love with the tape. We had friends over—there isn't much to do in our town—and we didn't have our driver's licenses yet. We'd watch the tape and make short films around the video and say what we wanted them to say. It basically became the blueprint for what we do now. It sparked our interest in the idea that videos can be entertaining in ways they were never intended to be.

Joe: About ten years ago, I got a tip from someone that the training videos at Suncoast Video (a chain that sold videos and movie paraphernalia) had a training video where Wayne and Garth impersonators taught you the finer points of customer service. So I filled out an application, interviewed, got the job, worked a four-hour shift at a mall in suburban Minneapolis, found the stack of training videos on top of the break room TV, and tossed them in my duffle bag. I went home that night, duped them, returned the next day with them, and told some random employee I couldn't work there any more. The bad news is that the Wayne and Garth video wasn't in the stack. The good news is that there was a Siskel and Ebert impersonator who gave "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" for good or bad customer service. It was wonderfully stupid.

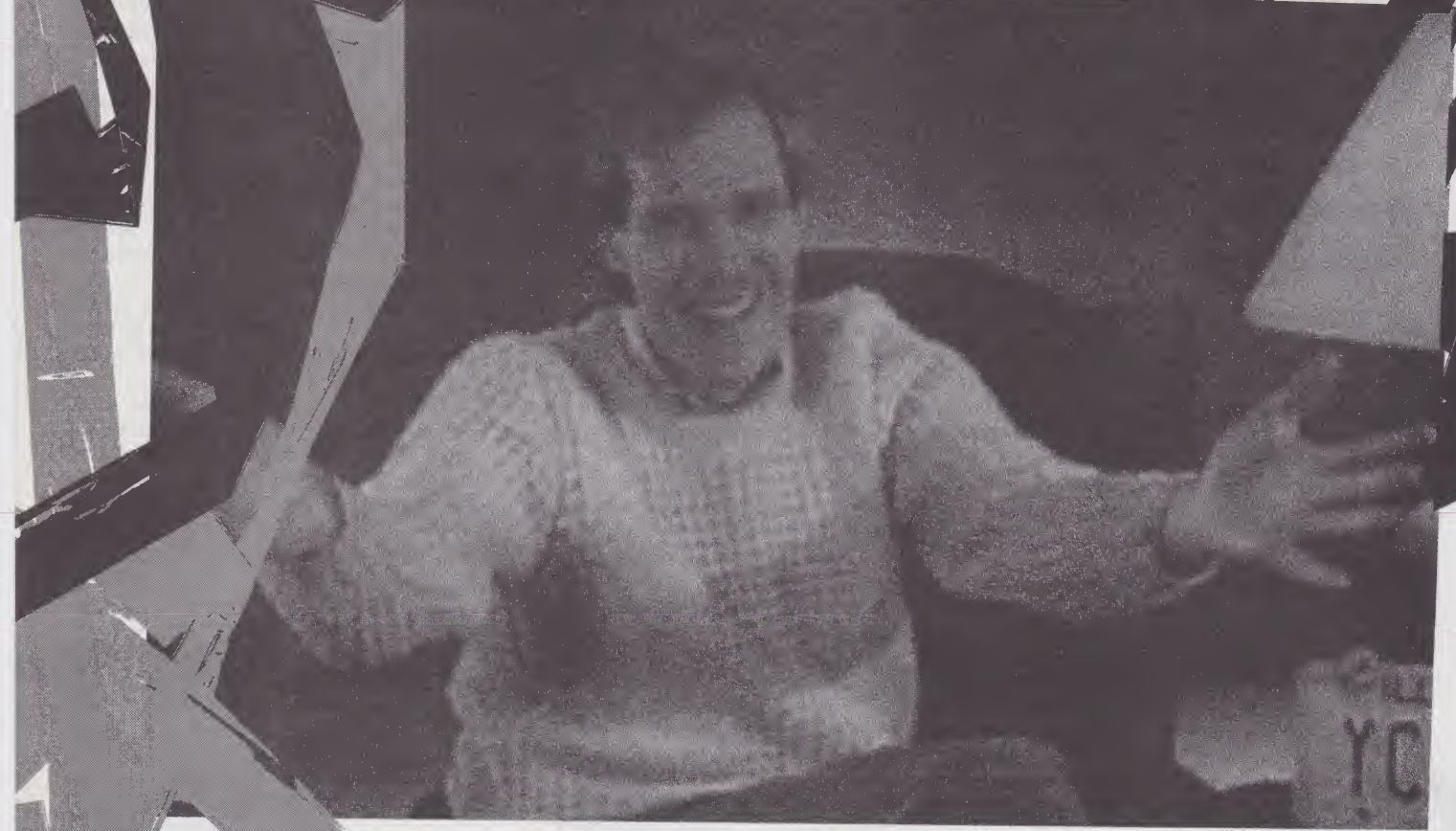
Billups: When you first decided to do the live show in front of people, were you at all nervous as to whether or not people would get what you were doing?

Joe: A little. But we knew we had some gems in our collection that were undeniably funny. Plus, we started the show pre-YouTube, so the charm of weird videos wasn't as ubiquitous as it is now. I think we were most surprised to find that people really liked watching these videos with a group. There must be something cathartic about watching videos that are typically relegated to a break room.

Nick: It was such an insular thing. It was a crash course in ironic enjoyment of things. We found there was a larger audience really tapped into that sensibility. We were nervous; we didn't know if this is something just we found funny.



Rent-A-Friend Video



Billups: What do you think is so appealing about watching and showing eclectic videos to other people?

Joe: A few things. First of all, everything is better on the big screen. Most of the videos we show were intended for the small screen, so something magical happens when you project them on a big screen. Second, it's fun to watch these with other people. Most of these videos weren't intended for a mass audience.

Nick: You're watching these things that were not meant to be shown in public: exercise videos and training videos and home movies. You're sort of giving people permission to laugh at it. The laughter is contagious the more

weird place. A lot of times—what sort of turned us off about compilations or people manipulating the sounds and whatnot—it becomes weirdness on top of weirdness. There is definitely a place for that. There are people like TV Carnage who do that very well. For us, we came to it very much the same way we do it in our living room for friends. "Here's our latest find. Here's where we found it. Here's some background" and we make some jokes along the way.

Billups: One thing I like about your show is that it, overall, seems fairly good-natured. The climate for video sharing on the Internet seems to be leaning on the nastier side, in my opinion. Do you think your reverence for

pissed." But, without fail, so far, people have been flattered by the attention. I think people seeing that it is not a mean-spirited show helps. They might think we are snarky jackasses — maybe we are to a certain extent — but I think it comes from a good place. We genuinely love this footage. It is close to our hearts since we found it ourselves.

Billups: What sort of finds get you excited?

Nick: What really gets us excited are home movies. Those are the most difficult to find because, generally, people don't give those up on purpose. Sometimes they just end up in a box with other VHS tapes that go off to the Salvation Army. Lately, we've been going to estate sales and buying camcorders. A lot of

We realized we didn't excel at anything in school except having an advanced sense of irony.

people are in the room. That's something that I think is missing from Internet sharing.

Billups: Do you think there is an element of mass psychology in presenting videos to people in public?

Nick: I think there is. You feel a bit subversive watching stuff that was not meant for someone else to see. If it's a training video you had to watch at a job or an exercise video you had to watch your mom use after school, it's not only nostalgia, but also it's being able to laugh at those things.

Billups: It's apparent to me that you guys have fun hosting the shows. What is your favorite part of the process? Is it searching for videos, editing, or the public sharing?

Joe: Probably the search. There's nothing better than finding some random Salvation Army in rural Alabama and finding boxes and boxes of old videos. It makes the drudgery of travel between shows totally worth it.

Billups: There is a sparse bit of significant history of hosting when it comes to presenting movies. Horror hosts like Vampira and Elvira. *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. I wondered if that sort of thing was an inspiration in any capacity.

Nick: I don't think it was a conscious thing, but I'm certain those things were influential. For us, the footage is so weird it needs to be grounded in some reality. We thought playing the straight man to the footage would help take people on a guided tour of this very

strange videos comes across to the audience during your shows?

Joe: I hope so. We're certainly not a mean-spirited show. It's not really our style. There's really no reason to disparage videos that, for the most part, have already disparaged themselves. Badness speaks for itself. It usually doesn't need any help from us.

Billups: The rash of Internet video sharing these days seems mean spirited to me.

Nick: I certainly can appreciate having any footage you want at your fingertips, but I do feel that something is lost, like the charm and innocence when you are trading videos. That is something that we try to sort of rekindle—the antiquated practice of gathering in a living room and showing off your latest finds. It's too easy to leave a snarky comment on the Internet when you're anonymous. We certainly lavish these videos with more attention than they probably deserve. I think the fact that we found them getting our hands dirty rummaging through VHS tapes certainly creates appreciation.

Billups: Sometimes in your shows, you include bits about meeting people who make videos you've shown. Many of the people you have met seem to have a sense of humor about what you're doing. Were you ever nervous to approach someone?

Nick: We've had some close calls. Sometimes we'll get an email from someone in a video and our first thought is, "Holy crap. They're

times there is a tape of a home movie still inside. Or if there is a camcorder for sale at a thrift store, we'll look inside for a video. That's solid gold for us.

Joe: My wife and I were at an estate sale in Queens, NY where I purchased a camcorder for four dollars. I brought it home and out popped a VHS tape! We tossed it in and our jaws hit the floor. It felt like we were watching Crispin Glover's home movie. It began with a woman with Downs Syndrome and a glittery vest dancing in a living room to *Phantom of the Opera*, while a freshly sheared poodle wandered in the background. Then, after a couple minutes, it cut to a topless old man, wearing a long blond wig, also dancing to *Phantom of the Opera*. Then he put on the glittery vest and danced ominously at the camera, kinda like that guy in *Silence of the Lambs*. Then, just when you think it can't get better, it cut to a house being destroyed by a bulldozer in a Queens neighborhood. The videographer—who I assume is the dancing old man from earlier—got into a vicious argument with the foreman of the construction crew who was questioning why he's "taking pictures" of the house being destroyed. It was the strangest, most unpredictable home movie we ever found. That video is featured in Volume 2 of FFF. It's called *Queens Home Movie*.

Billups: Often, when watching videos you present, there is at least a pretense to understanding the context of what is

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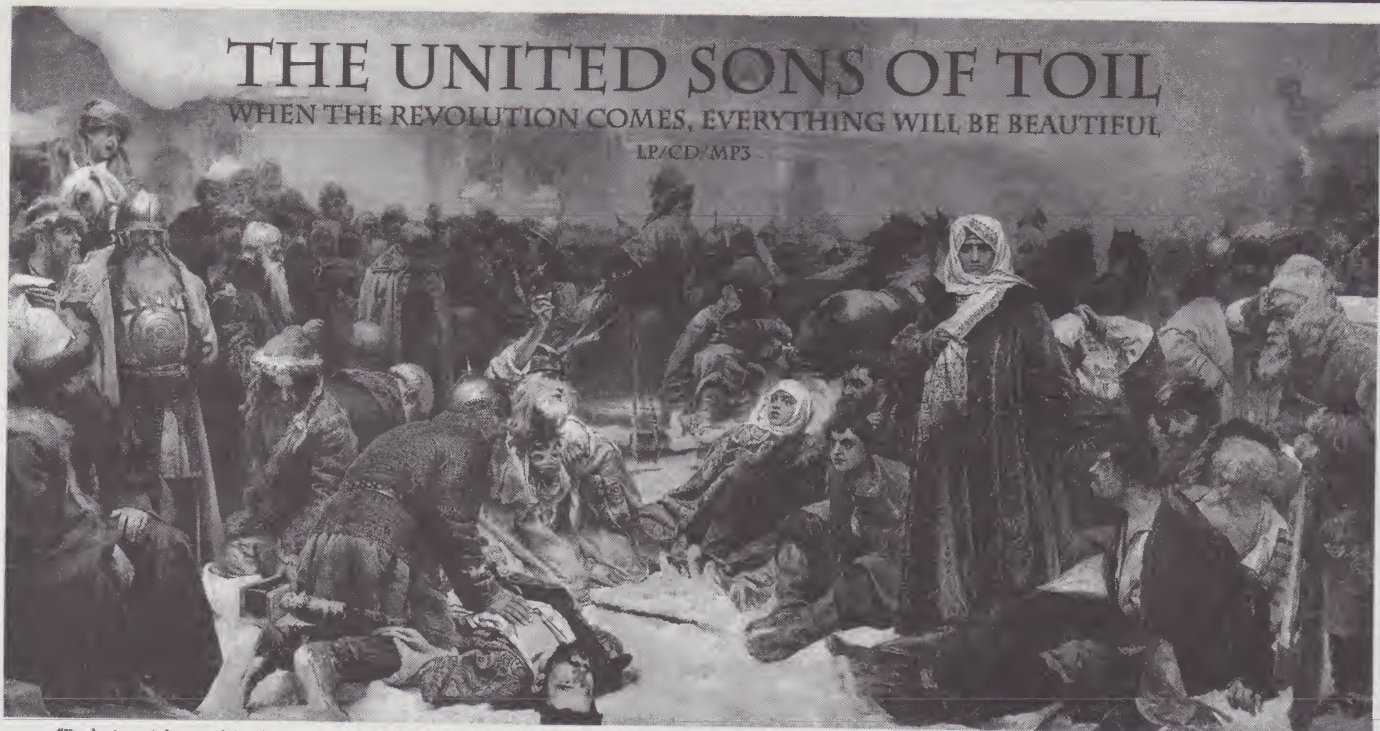
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I don't know if it's art or insanity, but it's one of the most entertaining things we have found.

going on, be it people screwing around or some sort of misguided information being conveyed. Do you ever get videos that are completely dumbfounding?

Nick: One example we found is a video called *Rent-A-Friend*. We have seen a lot of stupid concepts put on to VHS: interactive video board games and aquariums and fireplaces you are supposed to put on your TV, videos designed to entertain your dog or cat by having squirrels running around the yard. Any dumb concept that you can think of has been committed to home video. This one probably takes the cake. 1986. It opens with the guy sitting in an armchair saying: "Hi. My name is Sam. I wanna be your friend. What's your name?" and then you are supposed to answer to the screen, apparently. Then he asks you stuff like, "What do you do?" and "Can I look around your place?" You are supposed to suspend your disbelief and answer the screen. The only thing we could figure was that this was for extremely lonely people who have VCRs who needed a friend for an hour. So for an hour this guy talks to you and tells things about himself. Then he runs out of things to say about himself and starts revealing more about his

personal life than he should have. You sort of watch this guy unravel in front of your eyes. I'm still not sure of the full story, but we have tracked down the guy. We're going to meet him in Chicago.

Billups: There is one video in one of your shows that I want to know more about. Do you mind if I ask about *Dancing with Frank Pacholski*? I know it must be a public access show, but I don't understand the concept.

Nick: It's all elderly people sitting in a semi-circle watching this portly, balding man in an American flag Speedo slap his ass and dance around to John Philip Sousa marches. It's just another day in the life of a Los Angeles public access channel. I don't know if it's art or insanity, but it's one of the most entertaining things we have found. This one was taped from TV and given to us by a friend. Apparently, Frank Pacholski had this regular show that he did every week. We've tried to contact him but he hasn't returned any emails. I'm afraid it's still a mystery, but maybe it's better that way.

Billups: Is it always John Philip Sousa marches?

Nick: Well, we have a whole tape of him. He mostly dances to marches and classical

music. Sometimes it's patriotic music. In one episode he has this tray out and he is serving hors d'oeuvres wearing the bikini, asking people if they want dressing on their salad. It's very strange. The best part about it is the people watching seem like they were just told to come to the studio, having no idea what they are getting into. They seem as if they want to be anywhere but watching this guy prance around in an American flag Speedo.

Billups: I can't imagine what those people were told. It works on a lot of levels for me.

Nick: That's why I feel as if the mystery behind it might be more interesting than what it actually is.

Billups: Do you feel as if VHS and Public Access Television document a time and place in media?

Joe: Definitely. VHS is officially a dead format. The last VHS factory closed its doors in 2008. It concerns us a little because we're seeing thrift stores reducing their VHS prices to almost nothing. They can't get rid of them. I spoke to one thrift store employee who told me they turn away a lot of VHS now. I have a feeling that within a couple years, VHS tapes will be relegated to landfills. Because, honestly, who's going to buy a used VHS



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Formats may change, but bad ideas are here to stay.

JOSH HERTZ

copy of *Air Force One* at a thrift store? Public access is a dying breed, too. The funding isn't what it used to be and several of these channels are drying up. I don't know the numbers, but I hear from public access people who come to our shows that it's not looking good. Lucky for us, people are sending us stuff we would never otherwise see, so at least a tiny fraction of it will be preserved. As for us, we have a pretty good stockpile right now, so we'll be fine for awhile.

Nick: We definitely are nostalgic about VHS being the format we grew up with. More and more we see ourselves as preservationists of VHS: a format that has seen no love, compared to vinyl. The whole video store movement is almost extinct. What's worse yet is the mom and pop video stores—with their special interest sections—was a place where you would go to browse exclusive videos and free rentals, free anti-drug rentals, things like that. I miss that. We are trying to stage a storefront art installation in New York called Special Interest, which will be a mom and pop video store, but just special interest. A good portion of our collection will be on display and available to watch at stations. I think what the American Film Institute is preserving is the greatest one hundred films of the last century in a temperature-controlled vault. Nobody is doing that for

the Alan Thicke's say no to strangers video. Nobody is doing that for the Zsa Zsa Gabor exercise video so we do see it as our duty. These are videotape moments that most people would rather forget about. For us, there is a lot more truth and innocence than, say, in a polished film. The "warts and all" nature of these videos say more about us as a culture than some of our greatest intentional works of art.

Billups: YouTube and Internet video sharing has made strange videos a self-conscious pursuit, in my opinion. Do you think there is a quality in amateur production that is being lost or is changing in some manner?

Joe: Absolutely. Cameras aren't as novel as they were twenty years ago. Look at something like *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*. The people in that video are genuinely excited to see the camera. Everybody clambered for the microphone because it was rare to be on TV. That genuine excitement is gone now. With a few exceptions, quirky amateur videos feel really calculated to me now. We don't seek them out. Our rule is that videos have to be physically found. We don't take anything from the Internet.

Billups: Do you think that people's wider access to video cameras is a hindrance or an asset? Could it turn into anything as magical as a mountain of strange videotapes?

Joe: The thing we've realized is that formats may change, but bad ideas are here to stay. So, yeah, I think it's a good thing that more people are producing crappy stuff. But I don't think hard drives are quite as charming as VHS tapes.

Billups: I hate to see VHS go. My wife told me that the local Blockbuster was closing and I was sad. Then I thought, you know, I've traditionally hated Blockbuster but I hate to see this part of the culture die.

Nick: I used to work as a manager of a Blockbuster for a while. One of the first video finds I had in their two-dollar video bin was Mr. T's *Be Somebody or Be Somebody's Fool*. That was among my first finds along with the McDonalds video. It was in the bargain bin for \$1.99. Even Blockbuster had its value, even with its corporate ugliness. There were so many videos on the wall you could find that were true gems. Now that those videos are in thrift stores or in garbage cans, the frustrating part for us is that there are so many tapes out there and there's a timeline for when they need to be found. That's why we keep doing ambitious tours. It gives us a chance to hit thrift stores and make sure these videos are rescued and not lost to the ages.



BEN COOK

MUSIC'S ONE OF THOSE RARE THINGS THAT TWO COMPLETE STRANGERS CAN SHARE INTIMATELY. Unlike sex, music doesn't carry the threat of disease, unwanted pregnancy, or forced marriages. Unlike food, music will never be blamed for childhood obesity, diabetes, or heart disease. Music's one of the best inventions ever when played the way you like it. Its risks are minimal; its rewards can be just this side of feeling absolutely free as long as the stylus is bouncing around in the groove.

I found Ben Cook purely by listening. It took me awhile to put a name to the musician. Like drips through an IV, it was a slow trickle into the bloodstream, one piece of vinyl at a time. Let's face it—you can either take your time finding your own path with music, or you can constantly be led by the nose quickly to the next attraction like a goat with a ring through its nose being tugged by a rope.

I didn't know Ben Cook by name when I first heard the cocksure, strutting *Marvelous Darlings*, a band responsible for an unimpeachable string of 7"s and a live album. "These Swords, These Streets" and "Teenage Targets" have been stuck in my mind for several years now. I'm currently playing the ever-loving shit out of the *Live at Gales*—recorded in a tiny, cost-friendly diner that refuses to raise its prices—when Ben's studio was located underneath it.

It was exposure to Young Governor, a one-man-in-the-studio band—in the same electric, adventurous, mind-boggling vein of Jeff Burke's Potential Johns, Jay Reatard's and Mark Sultan's solo works, and Mark Ryan's *Mind Spiders*—that I finally put the name to the voice. Again, through a slow drip of 7"s, it all became more clear. Young Guv. He's the link to all these great songs. Melodic aggression. Tattered yet clear glory. The confidence of working class nobility seen through the lens of being a child actor. A fancy satin robe worn by a former hardcore frontman. He's classy without the pompousness and he knows how to construct and deliver a song.

Ben's a busy guy these days. Several years back, he joined Fucked Up as their full-time third guitarist. He's in several other bands concurrently—including The Bitters, The Roommates, Yacht Club—and is working on the release of playable lathe records etched into both wood and mirrors.

Music can be one of the most intimate things in the world. There's great joy in that.

Interview and layout by Todd Taylor
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Danielle Nemet, daniellenemet.com
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Todd: I'm going to take you back to your childhood. You're ten years old and your Mom takes you to canoe camp. What happened?

Ben: Canoe camp was just kind of a camp to keep me busy for the summer as any troublesome youngster would maybe benefit from.

Todd: In nature.

Ben: It actually wasn't even a nature camp. It was inner-city Toronto in a fake pond. It was the worst shit ever. Looking back, actually, I had a lot of fun. You've got to make friends at a camp. It was the first time I ever did something like that. So we're just canoeing around in this fake, cement pond. I guess I was one of the bad kids and I have a bit of a naughty streak in me. So I got into some trouble at the camp. I had this thing where I would tip kids in the other canoes and smash into them really fast. So, I ended up tipping this kid who happened to have Down Syndrome. It's not a funny thing, but it's sort of a Ricky Gervais moment. It's a little awkward to talk about it publicly without cracking up and then feeling bad.

Todd: The kid fell in?

Ben: The kid fell into the pond. It was a really dirty pond. Lake Ontario is really dirty, dirty water. I immediately was excavated from this camp and I ended up in the next thing that was available, which was this acting camp, which I fucking hated.

Todd: Was it at canoe camp where your brother and you watched yourselves shit under water?

Ben: No. We were big on camping. I come from a close family of my Mom and my brother and a couple friends. We were big on road trips. Yeah. That was one of the things me and my godbrothers would do for fun. Bored shitless. Literally. In a lake. There's only so much kids can get up to if you park them by a lake for an entire week—besides going to terrorize girls and take a shit in each other's faces underwater with a snorkeling mask. Make it look like a birth.

Todd: Wow. Back to acting camp. Child acting sounds like a weird world to me. What do they teach you at that camp?

Ben: It was more like a drama camp with these kids who were really outgoing and their parents thought they could benefit from it—kids who would make home movies and stuff like that. I used to do that. Do the "running man" to rap and film it with your friend and try coordinated dancing. We'd improv and do newscasters at this acting camp. I didn't really like it.

That kind of taste, that vibe, that hatred for the acting world kind of just stayed with me the whole



DANIELLE NEMET

IVY LOVELL

COOK

I don't want to be, "Why is everyone so stupid?" But it's hard not to think like that. I just try and ignore the fact that people are so fucking clueless sometimes about music.





DANIELLE NEMET

time I did it and it all started in this acting camp. It was something about the acting. From a very early age, I found what I was doing was so corny. I always felt that if I did something that I actually liked and I was a fan of, writing-wise, I would enjoy it and it would be fun 'cause acting's kind of funny. It can be pretty entertaining.

But I ended up graduating from this camp as one of the top whatever. I got some award. They ended up getting me an audition for a Fruit Roll-Up commercial and it kind of snowballed from there. There was a director who thought I had potential. After the first commercial, the taste of the money you would get in that world, it's like, "Wow."

I ended up doing R.L. Stein's *Goosebumps* TV series. It's weird now because my girlfriend's about five years younger than me, so she and her friends were the perfect demographic for *Goosebumps*. In their friend group, there are a lot of people who are really taken aback that I was in this episode that scared the shit out of them. That's kind of fun.

Todd: So you're talking ten thousand dollars for a Peanut Butter Cap'n Crunch commercial?

Ben: Yeah. You get paid residually every time it goes on and that was my first U.S., national



commercial. It paid amazingly coming from a family with a single mom. My Mom had a job out of the back of the newspaper. She worked for a plant company. She would try and sell tropical plants for business lobbies. Still does that. My acting helped out. I ended up being able to help my Mom buy a house with the money. I was able to fund what I really loved, which was music. Without that, I would never be able to buy a guitar or amps. Recording gear. I got into it really young because I was able to afford it.

Todd: You were able to help your mom buy a house when you were a kid?

Ben: It was near the end of my acting days; maybe when I was fourteen.

Todd: Wow. That's incredible. I promised my parents when I was eighteen I'd buy them a Winnebago when I became a famous writer. They're still waiting.

Ben: I wish. That'd be fun, too. I'm sure my Mom would love a Winnebago.

Todd: Do you remember anything you did enjoy when you were acting as a kid, in your roles in *Little Men* or *White Bird*?

Ben: There must be another Ben Cook out there. I was actually only in a few movies. I'm not in a lot of things that it says on the internet and IMDB, but I was in *Little Men*. I say that I hated acting. I wouldn't have done it if I'd really hated it. You can't just do something for the money. A lot of the shoots that I'd be on, you would bond with a lot of the crew members. If you're on a set, working sixteen to eighteen-hour days as a really young person, they take care of you and you become like this family for a month. Then, all of a sudden, it's over. I remember bursting into tears when I was younger, having to leave these people because you spent so much time with them. I will say that I did a Canadian period show and Ryan Gosling played my older brother. He was an upstanding individual. Really got along. I still correspond with him a little bit. He's got a band. We sometimes almost play the same festivals, so we corresponded last year. He sent me a T-shirt of his band.

Todd: Were you born in Canada? You lived in Bristol, England, but I'm not sure of the timeline.

Ben: I was born in Canada. My parents split up. My Mom immediately ran back where she came from in England. We lived in Bristol for about three or four years.

Todd: Then you moved back to Canada?

Ben: We were on welfare over there. She just realized that the situation over there was even worse for her. All of her friends were in Canada. So we went back to Toronto and she got the job that she has today.

Todd: The exact same job?

Ben: She's worked her way up over fifteen, twenty years. Same industry.

Todd: So, now you're thirteen years old. Your first band is the Smegheads. Explain that. Was there someone in your family or somebody who you knew that was musical?

Ben: I was predominately into gangsta rap music and rap music to begin with. I rolled with a lot of older kids when I was younger. That was the cool thing to do, to be a B-boy. But I knew that Nirvana existed. My best friend growing up, since I was two, was this really nerdy guy who, literally, would come to school and get wedgied for liking rock music and punk stuff. I took baths with this guy. Still know him. He played me Nirvana and Guns'n'Roses. "Sit down and listen to this." As soon as I heard it, I bought a guitar. For two or three years, I was secretly listening—because I still rolled with the older, hard-ass dudes. When I was a kid, I was kind of scared of them. I was secretly getting into the Ramones, Screeching Weasel. Green Day was getting popular at the time. I have my friend Alan to thank for that. He always reminds me.

Once I hit junior high and got rid of that whole crew of people, I started to grow my hair out, get into the grunge thing. That only lasted six months, then I shaved my head and had a Screeching Weasel shirt and Chuck Taylor shoes through pretty much all of high school until I shaved my head even shorter, bought some Nikes, and went the straight edge route. Quit weed. Quit drinking. Quit skateboarding and aggressive rollerblading—which I'll admit that I did.

Todd: Wow! What was the aggressive part of the rollerblading?

Ben: Listening to DRI and doing grinds. It's a pretty embarrassing thing to admit.

Todd: Well, that's the time to make mistakes; when you're that age. Why not? Run it up a pole.

Ben: I was a short guy. I had good balance. I hate walking. I was actually born with a dislocated hip and one of my legs is longer than the other. It actually hurts to walk. When I discovered I could hit the wheels, I hit the wheels. Through high school, we started No Warning. Hardcore kids.

Todd: You've made several references in previous interviews to stealing and crime during this timeframe of your life. Are we talking shoplifting? Pickpocketing? Breaking and entering? What level are we talking about?

Ben: I never did any pickpocketing or rolling anyone. To me, it was just typical, young male-type shit. Breaking into cars. We broke into a Winnebago that was parked by our house for the whole summer. So we broke into it and lived in it for a week. It was stuff that you're too young to get in trouble for with the cops. We understood that and

One barf went into my friend's mouth and I remember him going, "You puked in my mouth. It fueled me to go crazy." It was some borderline kinky homoerotic comment.

took advantage of it. You can't take us to jail. We're too young. We're going to do a bunch of stupid shit because we're bored.

Todd: So, during this time, around sixteen or so, was that when you came into contact with Mike Haliechuk of Fucked Up, who worked at Who's Emma?

Ben: Who's Emma? definitely had a crusty vibe to it. It was this anarchist book collective and space that people would just go and work there for free and hang out. There was a really dirty basement. It was some of the best shows and the best memories. My first memories of going to shows in Toronto as a fifteen-, sixteen-year-old were there. At the time, everyone would make fun of it. "Who's Emma? stinks," and "Fuck those hippies who work the counter." But, looking back on it, it was just a special place. There have been documentaries made about it now. It's where I met all the members of Fucked Up. Mike wore the same sweatpants all the time. He wore Birkenstocks and this stupid cap with patches on it. He was straight-up crusty.

Todd: During your teenage years, you had a habit of stealing your Mom's car and going to meet ladies who you met on the internet.

Ben: Yes, I did.

Todd: Young Governor has a song called "Cutter" and it's about this lady who finds pleasure cutting herself.

Ben: She just liked to inflict pain on herself. She wanted to burn me with wax one night. To make it not sound like I was some sleazy scumbag guy just trying to pick up chicks on the internet, I was actually pretty young. Seventeen and eighteen years old. It's an interesting thing. I've had conversations with people about it and told them about it, kind of hoping that other people did the same thing. But I realize

I think we broke it down for fun last year. "How much do we make an hour?" We actually make just above minimum wage.

that no one really did. I was almost addicted to this late-night lifestyle. Looking back, it was really dangerous to do. This is right when ICQ, mIRC, and all of those chat programs started.

Todd: Right when instant messaging started developing.

Ben: This is pre-AOL Instant Messenger. My Mom had no idea. Looking back, it's like, "What the fuck?" I could have been murdered. I would steal my Mom's car in the middle of the night and I would go to places in Toronto that I would never normally go within my circles of friends. I would go to project buildings, all over the place and hang out with these girls that I would meet.

A lot of the times, it wasn't even a sexual thing. It was this interesting thing to do for me. I've always been interested in people and their stories and what they're all about and where they come from and what kind of life they live. At the same time, I would have these insane, really weird experiences. "The Cutter" actually came from a collection of songs that I wanted to write about this specific time in my life. I wanted to call the album *Age Sex Location*. It's the typical question you'd ask someone when you meet them on the internet. "ASL?" I think I still might do that, or write a movie about it and have some short pieces. That time, in the history of the internet, is really fascinating to me.

Todd: It was nascent, developing. It's the first time a kid could use something digital to go find something analog. "I can use this machine to go meet this person I wouldn't meet under normal circumstances."

Ben: It was such a new thing. You could kind of just do whatever you wanted. "Shit, man. I'm going to take this and go with it until something bad happens." Nothing ever did, luckily. I actually still know a couple of the girls. I'm still friends with them. "The Cutter" is about this girl who I went to visit. She lived in the projects. She ended up showing me all these cuts she had on her arm. Then she wanted to pour hot wax all over me. I was like, "Uhh, I don't think I want to do that." Then she showed me all the holes she punched in the walls. She, obviously, had pretty serious issues. It's kind of a tongue-in-cheek song about the experience, but it's also a pretty serious underlying theme.

Todd: Songs, especially, can be good emotion pressure-release valves.

Ben: That's my defense mechanism. I'm one of those people who try to find the humor in the situation, no matter how dark it is.

Todd: Humor's a big component of not going fucking crazy or being a complete asshole every day. So, let's talk about No Warning. How old were you when it started? It started as As We Once Were.

Ben: 1998. I'm sixteen, seventeen. We took pictures of us jumping with our guitars at our practice space. We'd never played a show. We knew this little hardcore scene existed. We knew of Who's Emma? and a couple people who booked the shows there and we really wanted to get involved so we made this demo. To this day, I really think the As We Once Were demo is pretty fuckin' awesome in an old Warzone singer way.

Todd: Raybeez!

Ben: RIP. That slowly turned into No Warning, after we got accepted, if you will, into the Toronto hardcore scene as a very young group of positive go-getters. But, really, we were troublesome shit talkers from the East End. East and West in Toronto is very divided.

Todd: East and West L.A. are two different countries to me. I understand.

Ben: I'm sure it's the same in every city. We all came from the East End and we prided ourselves on this, even though there's not that much to be proud of. It's more of a "the few, the proud" type thing.

Todd: This is a direct quote from you. Why did you go for the, "Asshole faux tough guy façade"? How did you go from pop punk to that?

Ben: I've always loved pop punk and power pop and pop music. We were always huge fans of that. On the other hand, I really love aggressive music and really hard-hitting, demonic-sounding, Obituary-esque music. Obituary is one of my favorite bands. And the Cro-Mags. Stuff like that. When I started getting into these bands, I was like, "We can really make this awesome." The faux tough guy façade thing, that's more of a reflection when I look back on it now. It wasn't what we were aiming for at the time.

Todd: So it wasn't a goal that you set for the band? It wasn't the model? That's good to hear.

Ben: We were your typical, aggressive straight edge, hardcore kids. We happened to have a really talented guitar player and song arranger in Jordan Posner, who was this really random Guido guy from the suburbs. He would be afraid to wear hardcore T-shirts at that school because of his Guido friends. He had frosted tips. He looked like he was in a boy band, but then he would also come to hardcore shows. Under all of his Guido meathead sweetness, he's this really talented songwriter. He still is. It's this artist vibe underneath it all. It's just really weird and hard to explain. We all got together and did what we wanted to do and it was a really hard-sounding band from a bunch of 130-pound Canadians from the East End of Toronto. We were brothers.

Todd: I call that "unexpected depth." It's always nice to discover something going on in music or people that isn't instantly obvious.

Ben: With *No Warning*, people still come up to me and talk to me about it. People say it's one of the really good records of the '90s, in terms of that style of hardcore. If it was just some thug bullshit—which I knew it never was—it was really meaningful music to us. I knew there was something special about it. Even today, when I throw it on, it's still pretty good.

Todd: If this is true, can you draw me a mental diagram: did you puke directly into someone else's mouth while you were playing?

Ben: Yeah. I think there's footage online. This goes back to me being a naughty child as well. If I was ever running from somebody or being chased, I would always stop and the adrenaline would just make me puke. Wilkes Barre Positive Number Fest was one of No Warning's first big U.S. shows, so I was super nervous. A lot of the times, I just barfed on stage. One barf went into my friend's mouth and I remember him going, "You puked in my mouth. It fueled me to go crazy." It was some borderline kinky homoerotic comment. He was a giant muscleman.

I had a really bad incident in Boston and I puked all over the stage, all these chili fries. All over these girls. Our guitar player

actually slipped in it. The stage stunk. It was a disaster.

Todd: All your cords are dragging through it.

Ben: It was like a fuckin' GG Allin show minus the blood. After that incident, I actually made myself vomit with my fingers down my throat before every single show. I did it every show for years.

Todd: As a preemptive strike?

Ben: I just needed to gag or bring something up. Looking back, stomach acid's probably terrible for my voice, but for some reason, I'm okay. Besides, the acid reflux I sometimes have when eating certain foods is really painful.

Todd: One thing that people don't tell you when something intense is happening is that you've got to live with yourself through this whole thing. In the music industry, ninety-eight percent of the people standing around you are not going to be around you in ten years, unless something incredibly amazing happens. No Warning was touring with Papa Roach for a couple of months. You were on Linkin Park's label. You're touring with Sum 41. And they took you under their wing.

Ben: No Warning had two periods. I always want to make that clear. We released "the hardcore record of the year" on Bridge Nine. We were flavor of the month type shit. Bands wanted to sound like us and stuff like that. We accomplished all of our hardcore goals. Toured with the Cro-Mags, Breakdown. Mark Porter of Floorpunch sang on



Fucked Up, Halloween show

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our record. It was all the dreams a young Bridge Nine hardcore kid would love.

And then I don't really know when or why it happened, but we got approached by Sum 41's manager. This guy name Greig Nori. He is a great guy and very talented at what he does. There were a lot of drugs involved, though, at this time of No Warning. I don't want to say that the people who were involved with No Warning at this time were bad people because they weren't. I still really respect everybody and I wouldn't have done it if I didn't have a fondness for these people. I believed in what they wanted to do with our band. On the other hand, drugs are evil. We were nineteen, twenty years old. It's kind of a typical situation where these older industry people come in and get their band hooked on fun. "You can have all this *fun* if you do this. You can have all these chicks." Certain members are still "recovering" from the "fun." It shaped our lives, for better or for worse.

Todd: "Hooked on fun" is a great way to put it. No one's going to get sued that way.

Ben: It was a very typical and cliché situation, but it definitely wasn't for a band coming from where we came from. We literally came from the basement of Who's Emma? So, to see that side of the music spectrum and then jump headfirst into this world of cheesy bullshit...

A lot of these business people—people at Warner Brothers, Linkin Park—we didn't give a fuck.

We'd had enough with hardcore at the time. We released this record, *Ill Blood*. It was well received, but at the same time, hardcore fans and hardcore kids, they're all about their message boards and they're all about the internet. Everyone's a hater with an opinion. It just really put a sour taste in my mouth. *Ill Blood*, for the most part, is about hating hardcore.

Todd: That's not a good place to be in.

Ben: No. It was this weird place. We almost did all of this selling out stuff just to spite everyone. Like I said, we were angry youngsters. We're like, "What can we do to tell everyone to fuck off? We can go and make this record and milk some publishing deal and milk this record deal with Warner." We ended up walking away with a lot of money. A lot of people put a lot of money into No Warning and did not get it back. Tens of thousands of dollars went into that band and we got to tour around the world with all of these ridiculous rock bands and Snoop Dog and Ghostface—which was actually awesome. Then, eventually, after two years of being in that world: "This sucks. Let's just break up and make the contract void."

Todd: What happens is that bands on majors hit cul-de-sacs. "I want to develop as an artist or breach out," and you're just going to get

punished by your fans and, most likely, your management. Living with bile in your throat is no good way to go for long-term commitment to music.

Ben: It was just a really weird time as an angry, young man playing in a hardcore band and to put everything you have into it. To be involved in a scene that would love you and you'd have these amazing shows. And then you'd read all this stuff. It didn't feel good. I took it so seriously. "I don't want to have anything to do with this anymore. Fuck everyone." We made a mediocre hardcore mixed with pop record. Looking back on it, it's a weird thing for me because there are so many memories involved. People come up to me on tour with Fucked Up and they have *Suffer, Survive* tattoos, which is the name of the Warner Brothers album. I don't know if it's becoming this cult thing. I wouldn't maybe go that far.

Todd: It still made an impression on people's lives.

Ben: Maybe it's the story of the band that people are interested in. Maybe they're just being contrary. "I love that record! If you don't like it, you're an idiot!" That kind of thing; like it's so bad and then after six years, people are like, "It's so awesome."

Todd: You were five years ahead of your time. Exactly five years. After No Warning broke up, you started working at a tea company?

Ben: Yeah. It's kind of the odds and ends period of my twenties. I worked at a tea company making teas. I had another band going, which lasted a year. I would help write songs for other artists who were on major labels who couldn't do it themselves. Then I was kind of bumming around in England with my brother and Fucked Up was touring there. This is before they signed to Matador.

Todd: Probably touring on *Hidden World*.

Ben: Yeah. I roadied for them. Like I've said, I'm good friends with them. I knew them since we were really young. At the same time, I was starting *Marvelous Darlings*. Around that time, they asked me to join, so *Marvelous Darlings* kind of took a back seat.

Todd: So they asked you to be the Brian Baker of Bad Religion or Cassie Gaines of Lynyrd Skynyrd? I can only think of two or three bands off the top of my head that have three guitarists.

Ben: It was kind of a weird thing. I didn't really understand why they wanted me in the band. Fucked Up's known for its epic qualities. I know Mike wanted it to be really loud, punishing. "Nobody can ever go on after us"-style band 'cause we're just that loud and that abrasive. With three guitarists, it accomplishes just that. It definitely doesn't make pleasant listening. You can't hear fucking anything. I work in a studio sometimes and I record a lot of shit, so I'm kind of in tune with the sound element. Sometimes it's a little annoying to be in such a crazy, wall-of-sound band. It can sound very bad in the wrong context or club, but it can also sound amazing.

Anyway, they brought me in. Also, when I was on tour with them roadieing, they were surprised by how professional I was as a touring musician. They were just about to become a full-time touring band. They've never really gotten along. Certain members of the band don't gel. Everyone gets on one another's nerves. It's kind of a typical situation. Certain members of the band—I don't know what it is—to put it bluntly, they're just kind of babies.

Todd: So are you the buffer or the diplomat?

Ben: A little bit of that. Now, it's not so much because I've been in the band going on five years. Now, I couldn't give a shit about inner-band politics. "Get the fuck over yourself. You're fuckin' thirty years old. This is our job. This is a working environment. Suck it up. We're lucky to be doing this. Get on with it." So, basically, half the band has that point of view, but the other half of the band is very dramatic. So it's an interesting tension.

Todd: So Fucked Up won the Polaris prize. Twenty-thousand Canadian dollars. Is everything equitably shared between all the band members?

Ben: Actually, the Polaris money, I didn't get too much of because it was for *Chemistry of Common Life*. I didn't play on that record. I didn't have anything to do with it. I joined right after it was written and recorded. Usually, any money gets split up totally equally and a little bit gets put into the Fucked Up bank account just in case we need to buy flights and shit like that.

Todd: There are echoes over time of the reverberations for Who's Emma? and where people's minds are after they start making money.

In America, the word "socialism" is often used as a dirty term. Same thing with collectives. It's even harder to live up to those ideals when insane amounts of money are being thrown your way—or any money over a living wage.

Ben: That's definitely one thing we've held onto. We have a booking agent. We're signed to Matador. We're not part of the DIY punk community, where the band used to be. But you still bring certain ethics and qualities. You can't shake it. We split everything completely evenly down the middle. We don't have a manager. We try and do as much as possible. We don't make a lot of money, but we do it all ourselves and there aren't all these people taking chunks. I think we broke it down for fun last year. "How much do we make an hour?" We actually make just above minimum wage.

Todd: Perfect. I aspire to hit minimum wage one day.

Ben: We get to live a really interesting life and do things all ourselves.

Todd: Travel. Be in front of people. Have people listen to you.

Ben: Go to China. Be able to do cool stuff. But at the end of the day, we make the same amount as someone who's a floor checker.

Todd: I want to loop back to Young Governor and another nickname. Where did 'Lil Bitye come from?

Ben: That's another name that Fucked Up gave me on tour. I just don't like big portions of food. I'm not a big person to begin with. I don't subscribe to the whole typical American huge fuckin' plate. "How the hell am I supposed to eat all this shit?" I would just prefer to have a lot of little tastes of really good stuff. I order a bunch of appetizers. I'll taste everyone's food. If I can't eat it all, I'll leave some food on my plate.

Todd: What urge did your solo project Young Governor satisfy that none of the other musical projects covered? You seem like a busy guy. Why start something new?

Ben: Being in a band and being in a group, everyone has a say. I've found that in certain songs and certain ideas—I don't want anyone to touch them. I want to make the drums sound exactly the way I want it to. I have to play it a certain way. It's just a very meticulous project for me. Some of the songs need to be untouched by band members.

I really love the aspect of being in a cooperative and being in a group. At the same time, it really appeals to me to shut myself in a room alone and do it all myself. Do all the artwork myself. Have nobody talk to me. A solitary thing. A lonely project. Recently, I've forced myself to get the live band together and take these songs to a different place with other people involved. Because it did start to get really lonely and boring, just working by myself for five or eight hours in a room. Being in Fucked Up, Mike's the sole songwriter of the band and he's very anal about it. It's his way or the highway. That can be frustrating, especially when you're an avid songwriter. I'm not going to go and bring full songs or song ideas to that band because it's his thing and he's pretty OCD about it. To have those songs under his microscope, it's not going to turn out the way I want it to, so I just don't bother. I just help and build upon ideas that have already been formed by other people. Sometimes I'll try an idea or two, but if it gets shut down, I just go with the flow. I have other outlets. To clarify, I'm speaking about the arranging of the music and guitars here.

Todd: Two different types of creativity.

Ben: Yeah. Young Governor's purely from me. It's what I should have done for a long time. It creates tension when you're a bit of a perfectionist or if you have an idea for a sound or a song and it doesn't come across. You can't really articulate it to your friends and your band members, so you end up looking like an asshole band leader. Micromanager. I'm lucky enough to be able to have recording gear and have the know-how to make it sound the way I want it to, within reason. I can luckily fake my way through a drum take.

Todd: Part of the seed for Young Governor came from listening to *Blood Visions* and talking tech stuff to Jay Reatard?

Ben: Yeah. I always had plans for a solo thing and it just so happens that before I did it, that month, I was playing a show at SXSW three or four years ago with Fucked Up. I was backstage with Jay and we were partying. People were doing drugs. A lot of tequila. I like to talk about recording. *Blood Visions* had just come out. I had a lot of questions



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Having a solo thing, you have to be prolific to begin with. You have to have a few screws loose.

about it. We sat down for two or three hours that night. He wasn't the most sociable guy.

Todd: He was like a laser beam. Get on a topic that he was interested in and he'd focus.

Ben: We shot the shit and bonded over the drum sound from Wire's *Pink Flag* and stuff like that. Like how to perform a proper drum take and put T-shirts on the drums. They're not really unheard-of tricks, but it just inspired me. I'm like, "How do you play it all? Do you just throw down the drums?" "Yeah, I do the drums first with the song in my head."

So I ended up doing the first Young Governor thing, which definitely has a Jay Reatard vibe to it because I was super into that headspace at the time. Even vocally, I was putting on this Jay Reatard twang accent to my voice. I don't do that anymore. It's weird that he's not around any more. To me, I'm a pretty picky person and I don't like indie rock. I guess you can say I'm a pretty negative music fan, in terms of modern stuff that comes out these days. I think Jay Reatard—I'm sure it's been said by many people—he was fucking great. He was a really good songwriter and he had an element of danger about him; a power behind his music, and his personality that's totally missing now. He was a rock and roller.

Having a solo thing—I guess you have to be prolific to begin with. If you have a bunch of other bands and you want to do a solo



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thing, you have to have a few screws loose. I think it's an amazing thing to do. With Young Governor, I release punk singles. At the same time, I feel that I can just do any type of music with that shit and I probably will. That's what I like about it. "What should I do next?" It doesn't have to be a sound because it's coming from me. I feel that it's always going to sound like that and that's the theme and that's style. Even if I do a country song—like "The Married Man," which just came out, a one-sided flexi thing—if you play everything the way you play it, it always sounds like you.

Todd: I know Mario who runs Plastic Idol Records, and he's another person who encourages music and encourages certain artists: "If you have something ready, I'm going to put it out for you." Trust.

Ben: I can't say anything bad about that guy and he's just such a fucking pleasure to work with. I've never met him. He's released three records of some of the best music I've ever written. I hope to release a single with him once a year in some capacity for the rest of my life, even though it's just a pressing of five hundred 7"s. It's a small run thing. It's just as meaningful as being involved in a Fucked Up LP or a No Warning LP. It's such a pleasurable experience and a no-hassle thing. Get it out there. It's so fucking satisfying.

Todd: That puts green flags in my mind. "Here's someone who just enjoys being involved with music." Understanding that not everything is a demographic. Not everything is measured in advertising metrics.

Ben: The guy packs the records himself after he puts his kids to bed. He's a rare breed. There are people out there and I'm just lucky enough to be able to come across these people and I can't thank him enough. It's a really flattering thing to experience. I'm not totally used to it.

Todd: Let's go into the Marvelous Darlings. You and Matt DeLong from No Warning started Marvelous Darlings. You find Mark Fosco.

Ben: Marvelous Mark Fosco.

Todd: You start as a band that plays out. You're in Toronto and then Matt moves to Los Angeles.

Ben: Matt has always been really influenced by the '80s. At the time—he's kind of past this—he was really into '80s rock, like Hollywood-style bands.

Todd: Sunset Strip stuff.

Ben: It's the fuckin' worst shit ever.

Todd: Cock rock. Buttrick.

Ben: He really loved it. He wears women's clothes. He's got long hair. He's always been a crazy guy. Really talented. My best friend in the world. Crazy motherfucker. Craziest guy I've ever met. He's been illegally living in Hollywood, L.A. for three years now. He's been doing random bands and living on couches. He's got no stability, no job, no visa. He's this real-life gypsy. He just happens to be a super-talented guitar player. One of my favorite guys to write songs with. Any time we write a song together, to me, it sounds like a classically good song. When we wrote "Teenage Targets," we were like, "Holy fuck. This song could be on a teen movie soundtrack."

Todd: Marvelous Darlings is one of those bands that proves to me that most people don't have ears. They're incapable of listening to music that's somehow not fed to them. It's a cultural thing. To me, Marvelous Darlings is obviously awesome—and few people have heard them.

Ben: I kind of feel the same way. I don't want to be, "Why is everyone so stupid?" I definitely agree, but it's hard not to think like that. I just try and ignore the fact that people are so fucking clueless sometimes about music. You go on certain websites and certain media outlets and a lot of the bands that are around today—again I don't want to sound like a whining, jaded dickhead—but it's so fuckin' bad. It's so refreshing when you hear a really well-written pop song or a song that could have been a single in the '70s or '80s. That's what we were going for. It's kind of cool to know that Marvelous Darlings 7"s and songs are these hidden gems.

Todd: And they're out in the world.

Ben: They're out there. It's cool to have these artifacts planted all around the world. I feel that it's something that when you get way older and your career is looked back upon, maybe it'll be compiled and people will go, "Wow, this was awesome."

Todd: So, is Matt the one who peed on Avril Lavigne?

Ben: Yeah. That was another crazy No Warning night when we were just, again, put in a situation. "Hey, let's go out and party. Come sign

to our label. We'll take you to the Viper Room." Avril Lavigne was there and we had mutual friends at the time, so she was at our table. We were wasted and he... just pissed on her leg while we were all sitting down at the table.

Todd: Was she aware of it at the time?

Ben: No. She had no idea, but we all knew it was happening. Pretty nuts.

Todd: With Marvelous Darlings, were all the singles initially supposed to be released on an LP?

Ben: The first few, four or five. They all came from a session where we were specifically planning on singles. I never wanted to release an LP with the band and that's why Young Governor has never done an LP yet because there's always that element that I'm in Fucked Up. Fucked Up keeps me very busy. I'll never do an LP. This is just the psycho perfectionist in me and I'm sure it's not going to be as good as I think it might be. I want it to be a really strong statement of what it's all about. I think that's what an LP should be and I'm never going to do an LP with Marvelous Darlings or Young Governor until I have the time and the studio capabilities and the money.

Marvelous Darlings, we had an LP in the works, but this was when Matt was almost about to move to L.A., so it was all up in the air. "Are we going to do this LP?" He was really in this rocker mode. We did record the music for an LP, but in the back of my mind, I knew that I didn't like half of it. It was too boner rock for me. Marvelous Darlings was always this power pop American teen dream type shit. Poolside. So we just split that up. The last few singles have been part of the LP that was good. I mean, it was all good, just some of it wasn't my cup of tea. Matt used it for some of his own stuff in L.A. and it turned out pretty cool.

Todd: The record, *Live at Gale's Snack Bar*—your studio was located below Gale's?

Ben: Yep. My old studio was located under this diner. It's this really weird place in the East End of Toronto. Very barren. The Deadly Snakes, I think they talk about it in one of their records. They recorded their LP in a studio right by Gale's. So, it's kind of like this historic place that's been around since the '50s. It's run by this lady and her husband and they refuse to up any of the prices. Everything costs like it would in the '60s. Coke is sixty cents. Grilled cheese and fries for a dollar. Pretty good grilled cheese, even though it's just white bread and Cheez Whiz, but I really want that now, actually. So hungry. So, we played a few songs in her little dining room to five people. It's really, really small.

Todd: Do you have a lacquer cutter or a lathe machine in your studio?

Ben: I know a guy from north, North Ontario. He lives in buttfuck nowhere. It's very barren up there and he has the lathe cutter.

Todd: So you've made playable records from the lid of an ice cream tub. You're going to do a Frisbee and a mirror?

Ben: Yeah. I have the project in the works with Matt from Marvelous Darlings called Yacht Club and it's definitely different. It's not really a punk record. It's more straight-up pop. It sounds like Wham! or Prince or something. It's really funky. Matt moved to Hollywood and he went from being an '80s rocker to deep, deep, deep into Morris Day-style and '80s-era Prince funk. He's always very into knowing about every single record. He's this research dude, which I'm not. I just like to write the songs and stuff like that. He's the type of guy who's like, "Check out this song from Morris Day's seventh LP." So, yeah, that's going to come out on a mirror.

The lathe cutter is another Mario-type guy who kinda got attached to the songs I would send. After they were done, he was like, "Anything you ever record, just give it to me and I'll cut it for you." He just happens to be a guy who can be like, "You want to cut it on mirror? Do you want me to go to my backyard and cut down a tree and make records out of the wood?"

Todd: "Yes and yes."

Ben: "Ah, yeah. Why wouldn't I want that? That's nuts. That's crazy. Let's do as much as possible." I did a lathe series with him, where I would produce other bands and release lathe records for them and then we're going to compile them all on an actual 12" vinyl record. **Todd:** Cool. With the lathe records, you're saying, "I've made thirty-nine of them." Hard to get.

Ben: Exactly. No one's heard them, but it's actually, legitimately amazing music, so that 12" compilation, when it happens, it will be a really quality record.

Todd: I know nothing about what I'm referencing in this question. Okay, you're in a drum-off with one of the dudes from the Jonas Brothers, who I'm assuming is a tween-bop thing. Take us through how this whole scenario came to be.

Ben: Another weird element in my life in the past few years. In my down time, I'd do background work. Extra work on movie sets and stuff because I still have my union card from being an actor and you actually get paid really well to be a union-working extra. Really long hours. You can make two, three thousand dollars in a week. It's a fuckin' no-brainer.

So, I randomly, got this call to play drums in a Disney movie. They actually wanted me to play bongos, and I was, "No. That sounds like the worst shit ever." Then they're like, "It's in a Jonas Brothers movie." I'm like, "This is going to be another funny thing that's going to happen to me and there's no way I'm saying no." So I jumped right into it.

I ended up going there and not knowing what the hell I was going to do and they ended up putting me in as the backing drummer for the whole movie in the Jonas Brother band in the movie called *Camp Rock 2*. My girlfriend did it, too. She was the guitar player in the backing band. We were having this awesome time, eating food, getting paid thousands of dollars in this really surreal environment. I'd be backing the Jonas Brothers, lip synching. All of this fire going off around me. Huge production. I'm faking playing drums. I don't know how to play drums that well. I'm wearing a bowler hat. Purple jeans. Blue shirt.

Todd: You look really young, so you're passing as a high schooler?

Ben: First, they say, "You've got to come to the set looking glam," so I borrowed my roommate Mark Fosco's jean jacket and bandanas. They're like, "Not that kind of glam." They ended up dressing me like a new-rave hipster, which I guess is Disney's version of glam rock. On the set, everyone was retardedly happy all the time. They would always hug. They were always hopped-up on Disney brand coffee. I don't know what they put in their catering.

Todd: So, it's a culmination of things. Child actor stuff. Playing music. Being in weird situations and handling it.

Ben: It's been a pretty cool life story so far, in terms of music.

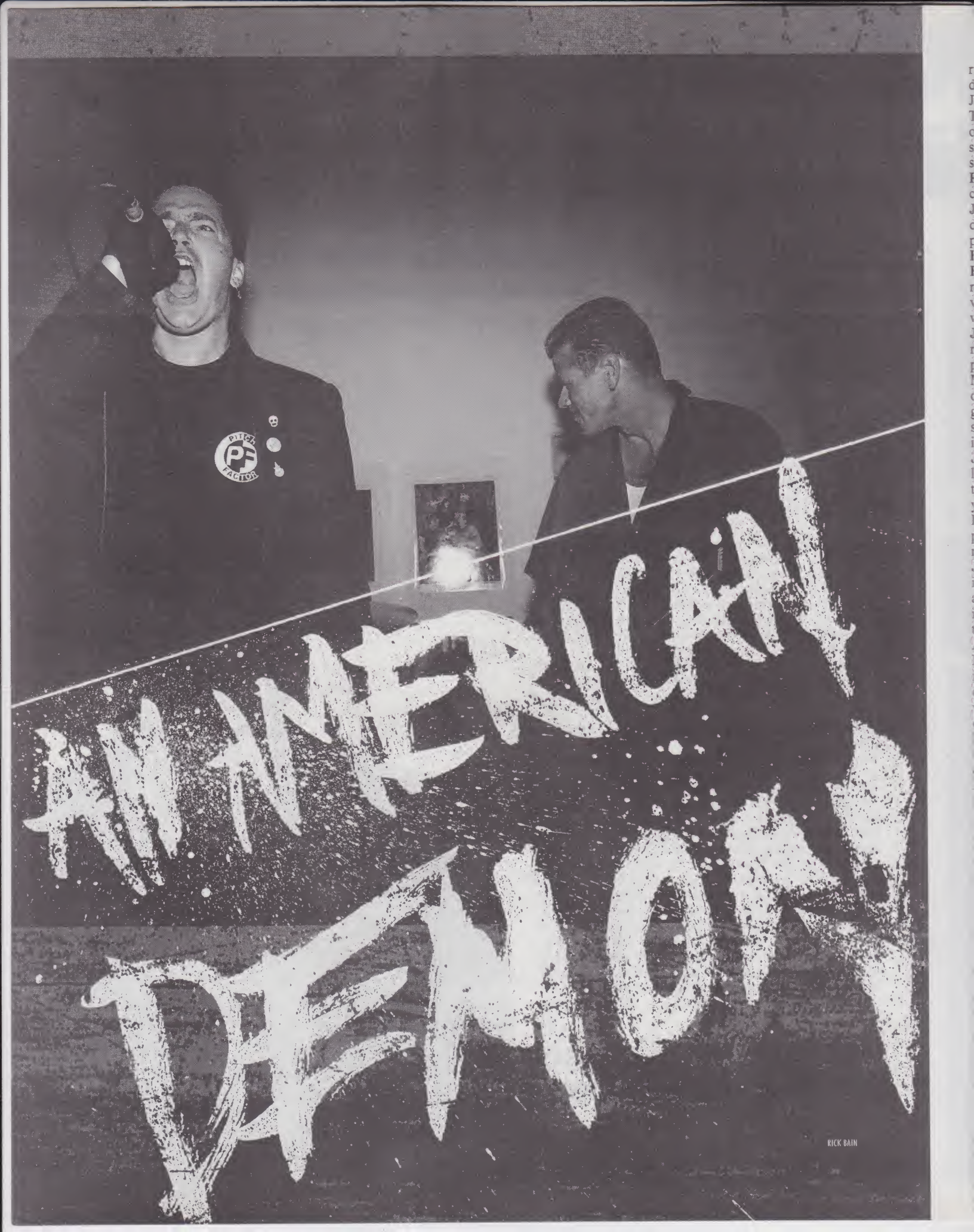
Todd: I read that your Mom, at one time, was suffering from a debilitating disease.

Ben: My Mom was diagnosed with hepatitis C while I was growing up and through my teenage years. We're not sure where it came from, but they think it came from a drug that was given to pregnant women back in the early '80s. It was just really hard for her to be a Mom and for us to be her kids. We were hell-raiser boys and she was suffering from hepatitis. She was on this test run of medicine for hepatitis C patients. They didn't really know if it would work out or not. She'd have to inject herself every day. Interferon. And not everybody is cured. It was a 50/50 type deal and there are a lot of side effects. It was not a happy time for her, but, she's obviously the strongest... my favorite person ever. And she overcame it. It's a fucking amazing thing that she did and I can't believe that she exists and I couldn't be happier that she's one of the fifty percent who was cured. I wouldn't wish that treatment on anyone. It took years. It's not easy.

Some of the songs need to be untouched by band members. Young Governor's purely from me.



DANIELLE NEMET



PITCH
PF
PERFECT
FACTOR

AMERICAN
DEFENDERS

RICK BAIN

JACK GRISHAM

I think the first time I ever talked to Jack Grisham was a show we played with T.S.O.L. at The Vault in Long Beach. I was making a sandwich from the deli platter and he commented on how professional my sandwich looked. I offered to make him one. He declined.

I'm not sure how you'd introduce Jack Grisham. I guess it depends on who you're introducing him to. He's known worldwide as the front man for the legendary band T.S.O.L. and a handful of later musical projects. He ran for governor of California in 2003. He is a hypnotherapist and a sober coach (to be explained later). He has appeared in several movies, including *Suburbia* and *Rage: 20 Years of Punk Rock West Coast Style*, where he tells stories of stealing from churches. He is also a writer.

Before meeting for the interview, Jack was nice enough to lend me his one and only "author's copy" of his book, *An American Demon: A Memoir*, as his advance copies had been shipped to the wrong state. He actually dropped the book off at my house. I started reading and twenty pages into it I thought, "Oh fuck, this guy knows where I live." The book is a memoir written from the demon's point of view. What demon? Well, I think there is a little bit of demon in all of us. Jack's demon will take you on a journey of attempting to drown neighborhood children, brutal beatings, disturbing sexual escapades, and everything in between.

I think I read it in seven hours over two and a half days. Upon my arrival, he asked me what I thought. I told him I really enjoyed it and that I knew people who had similar experiences growing up and it really explained a lot.

Before I even sat down, he started talking about his parents...

Interview by Julia Smut
Photos by Rick Bain
and Julia Smut
Layout by Keith Rosson

Jack: ...and I'm not blaming my parents. They had no fucking idea how to deal with me. I'm not saying they weren't fucked up, but they would say, "Hey we're going to the movies, the matinee show." When they'd come home, I'd have all the furniture in the street, everything. The couches, everything. I'd pile it up and make a barricade in front of the house and I'd be on the corner sieg heiling the neighbors and shit. I was just a little kid. They had no idea how to deal with that. That's what I tried to tell somebody. Punk rock, schmonk rock. I don't know what to tell you; it could have been anything. You get some fucked up kids; that's just what it happened to be at the time. I was fucked up before punk rock ever came. The fucked haircut story in the book where your mom rips the hair off with the shears... she laughs about that! She says, "You were punk way before those kids."

Julia: And you wonder because your parents had parents.

Jack: Well, not good ones. Both my parents came from divorced families. My mom used to stand in front of the mirror and punch herself in the face when she was a little girl. They were fucked up. I did a stats check for the book and found out people were fifteen times more likely to kill themselves than to get divorced. That was a total option. Isn't that fucking nuts?

Julia: Yeah. So the "demon" point of view, is that just for the book or is that how you really saw yourself? Here's a quote from the book: "If you want to know where demons truly come from, I'll tell you: we're from right here. We exist in a shadow that lies over your world—a kind of transparency of evil that some demented teacher laid out on an overhead projector."

Jack: I was actually called a demon in a sermon. I wish I had the tape still. I was involved in this little church. Now it's huge and on tv. They're really nice. The pastor is a nice guy, man. So he did this sermon about "one of the founding members of this church was seduced by Satan" and that whole trip. So there was that idea behind it, but then there was the idea of the selfishness, that whole demon persona being completely oblivious to anyone around you. Someone that was so self-absorbed that no one else exists on this planet other than just to fuck with. And when you disappear—when you walk out the door to go home—I'll just get someone else.

Julia: Even when you were young, you felt like that?

Jack: I thought I was "bad" early on.

Julia: Did you feel that way or were you led to believe that? Like a nurture vs. nature thing.

Jack: I felt like that. Some of the issues of the abuse—I'm not saying, this is not a, "I was beaten and abused" story. I was way worse than anybody ever gave to me. But some of those kids who are fucked with, they think they're fucked with because they're bad. One of the issues that the book dealt with is going into the demon persona: "I'm evil. This happens to me because I'm evil. And I don't want to leave

this evil home, because if I do, they'll find out what I really am, so I'd rather stay with the perpetrators than fuckin' move on." The sad thing is, when you actually talk to kids that are being sexually and physically abused, it's hard to get them away from the perpetrators. They don't want to leave. They don't want to rat their parents out. They don't want to tell.

Julia: I was going to ask you about the line, "And maybe, just maybe, they weren't always too concerned about who was playing with the baby." It seems like people who have been in that situation have had their entire life dictated by that event. They feel ruined from then on out.

Jack: I've been diagnosed as a manic depressive, as bipolar, with attachment disorder... [laughing] somewhere down the line, something fucked up. Growing up not wanting to be touched. Not being able to show any physical affection. Not to believe it; that people don't have feelings, that these aren't real people around you. All that shit comes from the abuse. A lot of it, you can't remember and then, if you do remember something, you can't trust the memory. What it comes down to is anytime you end up in

therapy, anytime something comes up, it always comes back to the same part: "Who fucked with you? Why can't you be touched? Why are you sexually promiscuous like this? Why do you have problems with violence? Why are you having out-of-body blackouts?"

Julia: So do you think you would have been "bad" if you had had different parents, a whole different lifestyle? You weren't predetermined to be evil.

Jack: I never wanted to be a punk. I've told people that. I don't wanna be a punk rock guy. I'd rather be going to Harvard and be a frat boy rowing crew. That's the thought in my head: "This is where I wanna go." But the minute something goes on, I'm the first one to jump out of the car and grab a bottle and say, "Fuck, we're in. Let's go!" Having that thought in you since you were a kid: "I'm dirty, I'm evil, I'm not right"...

Julia: Will that ever not be an issue?

Jack: No. I've been in recovery over twenty-two years. I've done a lot of fucking work. I tell people, it's like a totaled car. You can put it in the shop, they paint it, they straighten it out,



JULIA SMUT



RICK BAIN



I WAS FUCKED UP BEFORE PUNK ROCK EVER CAME.

Jack with Jim Decker of The Crow

but the motherfucker still goes down the street cockeyed. There's no way around it. I go down the street cockeyed. Now, before I got clean, you roll up on me and nine times out of ten, I'm being an asshole. The one time I might be doing something nice. Nowadays, ninety-nine times out of one hundred, I'm doing something nice. That one time, probably not, y'know, blackout, hitting somebody, starting a fight—whatever it is. That stuff's still in there. My kids have seen it a couple times. I'm not a tough guy. I'm not that guy. I like having a good time. One time a drunk came after my kid in the backyard and I blacked out. The next thing I know I've got him down in the bushes and I'm choking him and the neighbors are trying to stop it. Whether that ever stops, I don't know.

Julia: Was it hard for you to get sober? The stopping of the drinking and doing drugs?

Jack: No. That's what a lot of people don't understand about the program, about any kind of program. It's got nothing to do with stopping. They don't even fucking talk about stopping. It's not that you're going to stop, because you can stop a whole bunch of times. It's that you're

going to have to get loaded again, because you're just not "okay." You're not okay with all the chaos and the problems, and anxiety, and the stress, and the fucking sickness. It's all build up, build up, build up, and this is sober and you're mad. It's fucking madness and you need to be sedated. So how do you live mad without getting loaded and hurting somebody else? That's the trick, to teach us how to live mad.

We're mad—a lot of us, not everybody, but when I first looked at the drinking and using, I was like, "Pssst, big deal. I'm not shooting heroin. You're shooting fucking dope. You're way worse than me. I'm just doing blow. You live in an alley. I live at my mom's. Fuck you, man." I couldn't see it, but once I had been clean awhile then everything starts coming up. Now all of the sudden I can't keep my hands to myself. Now I'm having fucking panic attacks. My fingers are breaking out in blisters.

I went to a therapist about a year and a half into being clean. I had just quit smoking. I just picked a number out of the phone book. She asked me what was going on and for an hour straight I just went ballistic on her and at

the end of it she said, "Son, you need to be in a hospital." I told her I didn't have insurance and the only place they're gonna put me is in county. I wasn't going to a county mental ward. I wouldn't have gotten out. She said I needed to be in a hospital again and I said, "Bullshit. I'll tell you what I need to do. I need to go get out of here and get me a pack of smokes."

So, I didn't have trouble giving up all the shit, but now I'm an animal. I'm an un-sedated animal let loose on the street and that is not a good combination, man. If a deer is loose in the city, they tranquilize it. Who knows what the fuck they do if a tiger gets loose. It's like, "Yeah, tiger's going to go get some coffee today." Are you fucking kidding?

Julia: So the sober coach thing; do you think that really works for people? (A sober coach is an adult babysitter. High profile clients with drug/alcohol problems hire a sober coach to be with them 24/7 to prevent a relapse. Jack was hired to be a sober coach through an agency. He is no longer working as a sober coach.)

Jack: No.



I GO DOWN THE STREET COCKEYED.

Julia: So if Charlie Sheen called you and said, "Hey dude, come on up to my house."

Jack: I'd say, "Yeah, if you want to pay me to come hang out, I'd be glad to," but what does it do? I've gone on some gigs where I'm flying on people's private jets. I'm traveling with whoever, y'know, "Fucknut," who sold millions of records, teenie bopper fans, blah blah blah, but the crew are still punk working class guys. So all of a sudden there I am standing there, and one of the crew guys walks by and says, "Jack! What the fuck are you doing?" But anyway, I've told these guys before, "You're just a fucking baby. I'm a babysitter. You need a spanking." It's got nothing to do with staying clean.

I've also told them, "You could fire me right now, and then call me the next day and say, 'Jack, I really need help,'" and I'd say, "Come check into the fucking hotel next door. Come stay by me and we'll just do this for free." The funny thing is, this shit hotel next door... a whole bunch of people have stayed in that shit hotel. They leave these fucking mansions and come stay in the shithole next door.

Crazy story. I'm with this dude that runs a huge, huge company. Everybody knows this fucking dude, ya know? And he's fucked up. So he's pissed that I gotta be there with him, so I just say, "Look man, this is how we're gonna do it. I'll just hang out." The good thing about me is that I can comb my hair and throw on a suit and I look like counsel, ya know? I don't drop any f-bombs. I just look like a lawyer.

So, I'm with this dude. We're staying in a nice hotel up north. I say, "I'll walk to your job with you. I'm not even going to go in. I'll wait for you. You tell me when you're coming down, we'll go to lunch. I'll walk you back. Later, we'll go get dinner. We're fine. We're good." The guy doesn't want anything to do with me, nothing.

Later, we're sitting on a bench. He's telling me about what's going on in his life and this fucking bum walks up. Homeless dude. So I gave him a couple of bucks. You could tell that the guy's educated—it's like the cello story (referring to the movie *The Soloist*)—the guy's really intelligent. He and I start talking and this business cat's sitting next to me listening. I asked the homeless guy, "So, where'd you go to school?" And he tells me, "Well, I was at Stanford for awhile, but I graduated from Princeton with a Master's in communications." The guy's laying it all out. He finishes talking and wanders off.

The business guy sitting next to me, who doesn't want anything to do with me—I'm a fucking pain in the ass—he doesn't really have a problem, blah, blah, blah, looks at me and says, "Did you set that up?" He's getting angry. I said, "What do you mean 'Did I set that up?' He's a homeless guy wandering the street..." He says, "I graduated from Princeton." After that, he wanted to just go back to his room. The next day he came down and says, "I'm done Jack. I'm done. I've made arrangements. I'm going to go get help."

So it's like you're babysitting. Every once in awhile one of them wakes up and see themselves for what they are, and no one ever needs to babysit them again. You babysit people who are in comas. When they're



TSOL | PH. K. KAHN

awake, they don't need a babysitter anymore.

[At this point we take a break to go pick up Jack's youngest daughter from a friend's house. The interview continues in the car. I hadn't noticed because Jack was seated in a chair up to this point, but he is apparently only wearing what he refers to as "britches." They're boxer briefs. In his defense, it was a hot day. Seatbelt chime.]

Jack: I don't even know where my kid is.

Julia: So how do you feel about your daughters reading the book?

Jack: I don't really want them reading it, y'know?

Julia: Ever? Or not until they're forty...

Jack: Well, I mean, my oldest, her mom's in there. My relationship with her is good.

Julia: Her mom?

Jack: No, my daughter, because she made me feel so much for somebody. She was the first person I ever loved, I mean where I loved unselfishly. So, if you look at that, yeah, it's beautiful. The stories about her mom and the running around... probably not so much.

Julia: Did she really save your life, like it says in the book?

Jack: The guy breaking in and standing over the bed with her sitting up, yeah that's true. To tell you the truth, there's really not much in there that's not true.

Julia: Yeah, I figured that. Except, you kept saying you were blonde. You were? I've only seen you with dark hair.

Jack: I dyed it. My senior picture was taken in eleventh grade. It's long blonde hair with a little thin mustache. It's so fucked, man. If

you saw a picture of me young, I look like a little girl. My hair is long and blonde and to my elbows. In seventh grade I won for the longest hair in the school.

[Still driving the neighboring streets, looking for his daughter.]

Jack: That's not my daughter. I don't know where she is. This is what's fucked. She said, "Pick me up at six o'clock." Okay, but I don't know where you are. And you're not answering the phone.

Julia: You don't remember the street it's on?

Jack: She never told me the street. She said it's around the corner.

Julia: It must be hard for you having girls.

Jack: It's god's little joke.

Julia: It is kind of funny.

Jack: Yeah, it's funny. It's like, "This is what you get."

[We stop to call, finally get in touch with his daughter, get the address, plug it into the GPS, and continue talking about the book.]

GPS: Right turn ahead.

Jack: There's a scene in the book where I'm picking out Halloween costumes and I want to be a woman, because that's way more frightening than Frankenstein. Can I go as a secretary? That just fucked my parents up.

Julia: TSOL was in *Suburbia*. D.I. was in *Suburbia*. Casey (Royer) just had a little meltdown. He OD'd on heroin in front of his teenage son, who then had to run to the neighbor's house to call 911. *TMZ* thought it was big news, reported it, and posted Casey's mug shot. What do you think about all that?

Jack: Well, I'm bummed, but ya know... Seeing him on *TMZ* was kinda cool. Yeah, it was fucked and everyone was writing bad comments: "Heroin sucks," "Who is this guy?" Well, if you look up my comment, it says, "Heroin's not so bad. I bought his stereo and a cool guitar off him for \$20.00." But yeah, it's a drag man. What are you going to do? I don't know. I'm not anti-drug. I'm not against drugs or alcohol. What do you say about it? The guy's bummed out. The guy's living in a fantasy land. The guy's got an addiction. Maybe stuff's been fucked and he doesn't want to deal with it.

I saw a guy the other day and I thought, "Go back to sleep, dude." He's an old guy, trying to clean. He's physically beaten to shit. He can't get a job. He's living on food stamps and he wants to be sober? What? Are you fucking kidding me? Go to sleep, go back to bed. I drove a dude down to the cancer ward to get some stuff and he was drunk. This dude had been clean for a year, and now he's drunk and I don't blame him. I don't begrudge you going back to sleep; do you know what I'm sayin'? This is a lot to deal with. And without some sort of meaning or plan or faith or whatever the hell it is that gives you purpose and keeps you alive, this can be a terrible place to be.

Julia: In the book, you claim that when you meet someone, you can see how they will die. Is that true? Do you believe that happens?

Jack: Okay, it's exaggerated in the book, but when I was a kid I would always go "worst case scenario" on this dude. Do you know what I'm sayin'? It fucks me up so bad. One of my worst fears is dying.



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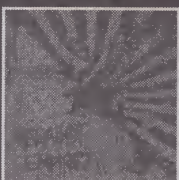
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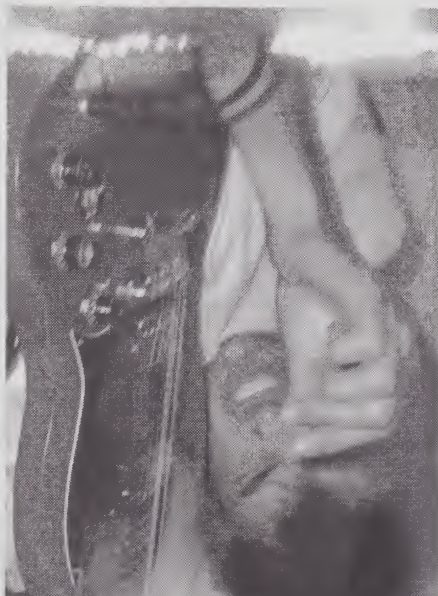


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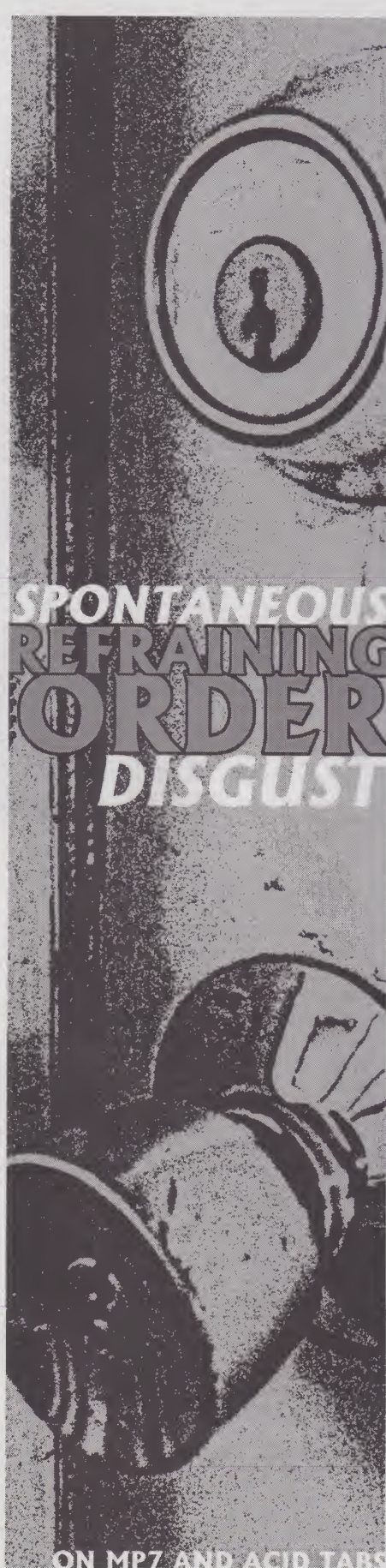
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ON MP7 AND ACID TABS

Julia: Really?

Jack: Oh, my god, yeah. It's so crazy. Do you know that most people's main fear is public speaking?

Julia: I believe that.

Jack: People are less afraid to die than to speak in public. A lot of what I believe in is that there's no consciousness after this.

GPS: "In one-quarter mile, turn left."

Jack: For being as selfish as I am—just wanting this, wanting to keep the flesh and keep this experience—and then thinking to myself that death is the end...

GPS: "Turn left."

Jack: I'm afraid of having what's mine, taken. I don't want this taken. This breath, this day, this place where I live, this is mine. So I'm always thinking "worst case scenario."

Julia: What about past lives?

Jack: Now here's what's trippy about that. I'm not a fan.

Julia: You and Shirley Maclaine hanging out?

Jack: No. I'm Christian based. I believe in the teachings of Christ, solid teachings. Like the Jefferson bible. Have you ever read the Jefferson bible?

Julia: No.

Jack: Thomas Jefferson re-wrote the bible. He took out all the miracles and just left the teachings. He said, "Hey, the teachings are great, but I'm not buying this." So here's the deal with past lives. I'm a hypnotherapist. I do regressions....

GPS: "In one-quarter mile, turn right."

[At this point, I motion to Jack to look out up ahead. There are a few people on horseback crossing the road and he's not really slowing down.]

Jack: We're not going to worry about these horses. We're twenty-first century. I'm not going to stop for that. That's a mirage. It's a mirage! C'mon, really? We hit a horse, it's like, "Dude, are you fucking kidding me? There were people on horseback. I'm in a

fucking car. I don't understand." You could probably go to court and get off on that.

GPS: Turn right.

Jack: You know that the mom can transfer her feelings to the child during pregnancy.

Julia: Right.

GPS: After one quarter mile, turn left.

Jack: So there is that connection.

GPS: Turn left.

Jack: So what if she's not transferring her thoughts? She's transferring her mother's thoughts and her mother's mother's thoughts, all the way down? Transferred memories on a cellular level.

GPS: "Your destination is one quarter mile on right."

[As we pull up to the house, there is a toddler out on the sidewalk, outside the gate, playing with the hose.]

Jack: This child is out, unattended. Oh Jesus, the mom is going to want to meet me. I didn't want to meet the mom. I can just stand here

**I was in kindergarten digging a hole under the fence.
I dug a hole during recess, every day for like a week.**

**I fit through it and I went.
It's been going on forever.**

ISOL | RICK BAIN



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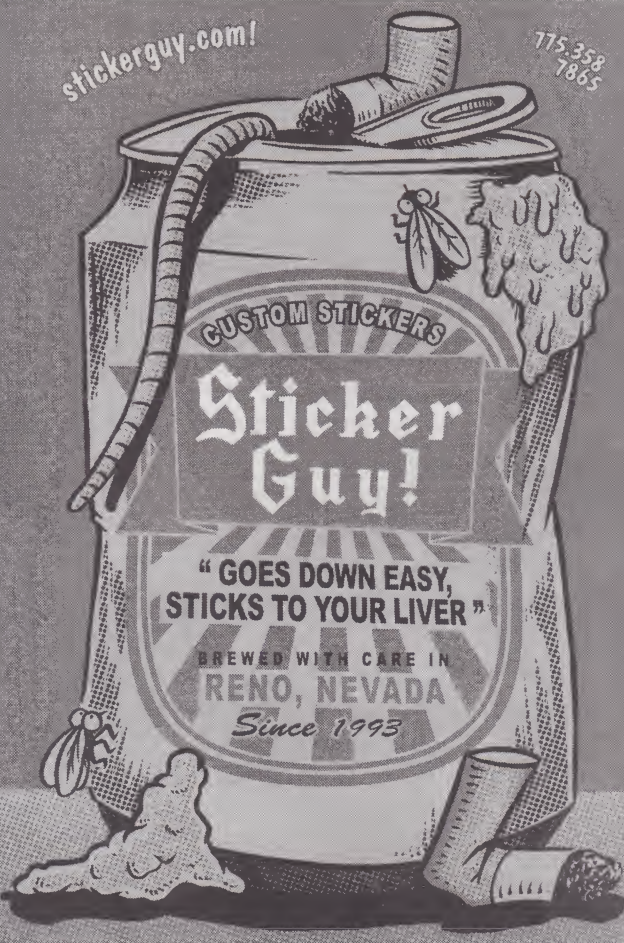
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RICK BAIN

and say "Hi." I'm in my underwear, but I can just stand next to the car. Now the mom's sitting there with her legs spread. That's a little rough. Do you see that?

Julia: [laughing] Yep.

Jack: So we've got a child, outside the gate, unattended. We have mom, spread eagle. It's like, "What's going on here?" [Opening door and getting out.] I'll just wave.

[Now Jack's eleven-year-old is in the car with us, so the interview gets toned down a bit.]

Julia: My friend wanted me to ask you what's buried in Todd's grandparent's backyard. (Todd Barnes, Jack's long-time friend and drummer for T.S.O.L.)

Jack: Oh god, all sorts of crap. Todd lived with his grandmother and grandfather. The grandmother was kinda psycho. The grandfather was really nice, but tripping on Todd. Todd was like a spoiled kid—. They didn't live in a big really nice house, but the grandfather owned his own business. He just gave Todd money for whatever he needed. We lived in a lower, middle class neighborhood.

Everything we used to do (code for robberies), was done in the evening. So in the morning, when the sun would come up, we'd see what we had. So we'd lay all the stuff out in the morning. Todd's grandfather would say, "Todd, where'd you get that stuff?" Todd used to tell his grandfather, "I picked it up, Bob. Go back inside." It was sad. Todd had a dog and it went crazy and bit him, so Todd shot it with a bow and arrow, and the dog's walking around with an arrow sticking out of its ass. Just idiots, y'know what I mean?

Julia: Are there tombstones buried back there?

Jack: Yeah, there are tombstones. There are

religious things. Anything we could carry. The cross that got ripped off, that's back there. There are guns buried back there.

Julia: Is the house still there?

Jack: Now this is what's trippy. Todd's grandmother and grandfather are dead. Todd's dead. His mom's off her rocker somewhere. I drove by once, just feeling kind of nostalgic, and there's a new house there. So I wonder if they dug up the backyard or just built over it.

Julia: The book's done, so what's next?

Jack: Now, it's just trying to get the word out. Trying to get people to read it and tell their friends about it. People are talking about making a movie out of it, so then it's like, "Who do you get?"

Julia: And how do you keep it from turning out like the *Germs* movie...

Jack: Well, it's a different trip than that. The thing about this book is, it's got nothing to do with TSOL, really. They wanted a standard, non-fiction story about life in TSOL punk rock 1980, and I gave them this. The good thing is they were stoked. It could have gone the other way, and I was ready for that.

[Now back at Jack's office, we park and go back inside with his daughter and Jack's girlfriend, Kate, has arrived.]

Julia: So did you graduate high school?

Jack: Yes.

Julia: How did you manage that?

Jack: That's what they said, too. I missed a lot of days. It was a couple months of absences. They let me graduate with everybody, but I had to go to summer school. There was a time where I tried to go straight. I had tried to go straight since third grade. I was in kindergarten digging a hole under the fence. I dug a hole during recess, every day

for like a week. Dug next to the fence where it was low key and one day I fit through it and I went. It's been going on forever. The story in the book about me leaving my grandmother's house, I'm not even kindergarten age yet. I walked from 28th and Delta and made it all the way to Spring Street in Signal Hill before my grandmother found me. Three or four miles. Five years old, not even thinking that that's wrong.

Julia: Some people blame Orange County bands for bringing the violence to the punk scene. Do you think that's true?

Jack: No. The trouble is city kids are different than suburban kids. You can be a freak in the city. You drive out to the farm, you can't be a freak anymore. All the freaks on the farm, head to the city. So here are these guys being punk in the city and they're going to art school and the city's full of color.

In the suburbs, you go to high school and there's one gay guy. He was "that guy." The poor dude got hell for it. So you come and be a punk down here and people want to fight you for it. We were just big guys, y'know. We're big surfer guys and messed up before punk rock. So you've got big guys, that are athletic, are already angry, and they're getting looser and looser and the music ain't stopping.

You've got the tribal drums going and someone says "punk sucks" and it's like, "Yeah, let's get 'em." Something that never gets mentioned is that there were a lot of people who would go to shows just to beat up punks. These guys would get in their car to go beat up punks, thinking they were going to run into a bunch of arty guys pogoing to Kraftwerk. Then they run into this crew of idiots, basically animals.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Adrian Salas

- Punxest Drum Machine Bands*
- Colleen Green (unknown drum machine)
 - The Austerity Program (Drum Machine)
 - Japanther / The Death Set (both have drummers, but backing track beats)
 - Bérurier Noir (Dédé)
 - 1. Big Black (Roland)

Andy Conway

1. Fucked Up, *David Comes to Life* LP
2. Macho Madness, *The Ultimate Randy Savage* (RIP). Collection DVD
3. Mega City Four, *Magic Bullets* CD
4. Night Birds, *Fresh Kills Vol. 1* CD
5. Smoke DZA, *The Hustlers* Catalog mixtape

Aphid Pewit

- Dwarves, *The Dwarves are Born Again* CD
- Cülo, *Toxic Vision 7"*
- The Slobs, *Look Busy, Do Nothing 7"*
- William S. Burroughs: *A Man within* DVD
- Schlitz Classic 1960s formula beer

Art Ettinger

- The Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Knows Your Sins* LP
- Spider Babies, *Rock and Roll Rejects 7"*
- Face To Face, *Laugh Now, Laugh Later* LP
- The Traditionals, *Steel Town Anthems* CD
- The Dead Milkmen, *The King in Yellow* CD

Ben Snakepit

- Top Five Chaos in Tejas Moments*
1. THE SHITTY LIMITS!!!!
 2. Partyin' with Ty Stranglehold
 3. This Is My Fist
 4. Julian from Drunken Sailor
 - Records getting me wasted
 5. FYP

Billups Allen

- Top 5 Songs That Start with Just Vocals*
1. Big Mama Thornton, "Hound Dog"
 2. The Trashmen, "Surfin' Bird"
 3. The Eat, "Communist Radio"
 4. The Replacements, "Customer"
 5. Descendents, "Wienerschnitzel"

Bryan Static

- Best Bits of the Summer (Thus Far)*
- Recording an album with Mike Vasquez
 - Opening for the Chinese Telephones
 - Seeing FYP and This Is My Fist, two bands that I never thought I'd get a chance to see.
 - Smart Cops, *Per Proteggere e Servire*
 - Having time to read huge books and catch up on the records that've been piling up.

Chris Mason

1. Future Virgins, *Western Problems* LP
2. No Statik, *We All Die in the End* 12"
3. Something Fierce, *There Are No Answers* LP
4. Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Know Your Sins* LP
5. Brutal Knights, *Blown to Completion* LP

Chris Pepus

- Greek Left Review (greekleftreview.wordpress.com)
- Toys That Kill, the Arrivals, the Humanoids, Black For A Second, at El Lenador, St. Louis
- Smelling a Rat (play)
- The King of Marvin Gardens (DVD)
- Martin Rowson's cartoons

Corinne Smida

- Iron Chic
- Rumspringer
- Dark Rides
- My Brother My Brother and Me (podcast)
- Fay Wray...again

Craig Horky

1. Ashley Hagdohl (Michigan is gonna miss you. I'm gonna miss you.)
2. The Plurals / Frank And Earnest, Split 7"
3. The random dude in Anaheim who got the Menzingers shirt I designed tattooed on his arm.
4. "Sea Foam Green" by Jawbreaker on endless repeat

5. ALL, *Pummel* (I'm still under the unpopular opinion that Chad Price-era ALL is better than the Descendents)

Craven Rock

1. The Measure [SA], *One Chapter in the Book* LP
2. Hidden Spots, *One Hundred Million Voices* LP
3. Too Many Daves, *Weekend at Dave's* LP
4. Crackbox, Self-titled 7"
5. These podcasts: *Tank Riot*, *Risk*, *CiTR-Nardwar* *The Human Serviette Presents*, *Sick & Wrong*, *Razorcake*

CT Terry

1. Sundials, *Never Settle* LP
2. Private Dancer, *Alive in High Five* LP
3. Shabazz Palaces, *Black Up* LP
4. My short story "Watering Tyrell" on *TrillingMagazine.com*
5. R.I.P. Dave Mansbach

Daryl Gussin

- High Tension Wires, *Welcome New Machine* LP
- Big Crux, *Big Crux is a Big Funk 7"* tie with Bad Banana, *Cry About It 7"*
- Neighborhood Brats, Self-titled CDEP
- Lenguas Largas, *Ese Culito* 12"EP
- Kicking Spit, *Psychorockbullshit* 12"EP

Dave Williams

- In Solitude, *The World, The Flesh, The Devil* LP
- The Devil's Blood, *The Time of No Time Evermore* LP
- Portrait, *Crimen Laesae Majestatis Divinae* LP
- Sabbath Assembly, *Restored to One* LP
- Blood Ceremony, *Living With the Ancients* LP

Designated Dale

- Top 5 Singers from the '60s That Didn't Suck Complete Hippie Ass, In No Particular Order*
- Sam Cooke
 - Gerry Roslie
 - James Brown
 - Ronnie Spector
 - Otis Redding

Ever a.k.a. The Girl About Town

1. Much thanks again to Toys That Kill!
2. Bucket O' Blood Books and Records, Chicago... Marc you're awesome!
3. The Spits at Havoc Blackout, Chicago

4. The Marked Men, *This Is My Fist*, *Chinese Telephones*, *The Arrivals*, and *Toys That Kill at The Empty Bottle*, Chicago
5. The Manges at Reggie's, Chicago

Garrett Barnwell

1. Little Sister, *Repercussions* Cassette
2. Rowsdower, *Demo* Cassette
3. Government Issue, *Boycott Stabb Complete Session* LP
4. Bangers, *Small Pleasures* LP
5. Me First And The Gimme Gimmes, *Go Down Under* CD

Jake Shut

- Soviettes, *Marked Men*, and *Toys That Kill* live at the Triple Rock (was tardy for Birthday Suits and The Arrivals)
- The Dwarves, *Are Born Again*
- Doug Stanhope, *Oslo*, *Burning the Bridge to Nowhere*
- The Giraffes, *Ruled*
- Bob Burns, Self-titled

Jennifer Federico

- Top 5 Shows from the Past Three Months*
1. Itchy-O at the Uptown, Oakland
 2. High Tension Wires, Sharp Objects, Neighborhood Brats, at the Rockit Room, San Francisco
 3. Mark Sultan at Sidecar Factory Club, Barcelona
 4. A-Frames at Bottom of the Hill, San Francisco
 5. The Ex at Bottom of the Hill, San Francisco

Joe Dana

- Top 5 Punk Rock Bowling Moments That Will Not Stay in Vegas*
1. Tiltwheel at the Bunkhouse: Davey Tiltwheel telling the one woman who took off her shirt during their set, "If anyone gives you any sexist shit, punch them in the dick!"
 2. Drinking beer from body parts!
 3. Old Man Markley coming in last place in the bowling tournament over Tiltwheel! Wha?!
 4. The much awaited return of "Lasers and Water!" at Punk Rock Bowling!
 5. Descendents! Cocksparrer! Off With Their Heads as a three piece! Exclamation Points!

Joe Evans III

1. The Max Levine Ensemble, *Mr. Gikokovich 2000-2005: A Retrospective* CD
2. The Cute Lepers, *Adventure Time* CD
3. WTF Podcast with Marc Maron
4. The Thermals, live
5. *Deadpool* (2008) (comic)

"If anyone gives you any sexist shit, punch them in the dick!"

Joshua Ian Robles

1. Against Me!, "We Laugh at Danger"
2. Leatherface, "Diego Garcia"
3. Against Me!, "I Still Love You Julie"
4. Be My Doppelganger, "Chemical Spin"
5. Against Me!, "Cliché Guevara"

Juan Espinosa

- The Shitty Limits, live at the Blue Star
- Vile Gash and Nukkehammer, live at the Blvd.
- Despise You / Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Split LP
- Assholeparade / Slight Slappers, Split LP
- Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Knows Your Sins* LP

Katie Dunne

1. White Lung, *It's the Evil* LP
2. Cannomen, *Sex on the Bleach 7"*
3. Wave the Ocean Wave the Sea LP
4. Austra, *The Beat and the Pulse* EP
5. Terrapin Hopsecutioner

Keith Rosson

1. Holding Onto Sound, *The Sea* CD
2. New Mexican Disaster Squad, *Weapons & Equipment of Counter-Terrorism 7"*
3. Unfun, *Sick Outside View* cassette
4. Dirty Tactics, *The Divine Middle 7"*
5. Teen Rebel Dopefiends, Demo CD-R

Kiyoshi Nakazawa

- What Comics Am I Reading?*
1. Crickets #3 by Sammy Harkham
 2. Upright #4 by Jordan Crane
 3. DC Showcase Presents *The Warlord Volume 1* by Mike Grell
 4. *King of the Flies* #1 by Mezzo and Pirus
 5. *Fight or Run: Shadow of the Chopper* by Kevin H

Kurt Morris

1. Small Brown Bike, *Fell & Found*
2. Low, *C'Mon*
3. Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*
4. Chad Vangaalen, *Diaper Island*
5. Neurosis (everything)

Lauren Measure

- Top 5 Recent Faith-Renewing Moments at Shows*
1. RVIVR covering a song by Jamie Ewing
 2. The mid-set champagne toast at the P.S. Eliot record release show
 3. Every Aye Nako set I've ever seen
 4. Whenever Shellshag plays in the center of a crowd
 5. Hiretsukan playing after a long hiatus

Mark Twistworthy

1. Chaos In Tejas 2011
2. Archers Of Loaf, live
3. The OBNI's, 7"s and live
4. Milk Music, live
5. Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Knows Your Sins* LP

Matt Average

- Burning Sensations, Self-titled LP
- The Normals, *Vacation to Nowhere* LP
- Roses Never Fade, *Fade to Black* LP
- Death Dealers, *Files of Atrocity* CD
- Zero Zero, demo CD-R

Mike Frame

1. Pains Of Being Pure At Heart, *Belong* CD
2. Suedehead, Self-titled 7"
3. Mighty Grasshoppers, Self-titled CD
4. Jason Isbell & 400 Unit, *Here We Rest* CD
5. Raphael Saadiq, *Stone Rollin* CD

Naked Rob

The Thrash Attack, SFC

1. Kicker, *Bobsaw 7"* (Oakland punk)
2. Midnight Bombers, *Dirty Business* CD (SF rock-core)
3. Police Teeth, *Awesomer than the Devil* CD (Post punk noise rock)
4. The Clutters, *Breaking Bones* CD (High energy rock'n'roll)
5. The Pussywarmers, *The Chronicles of...* CD (Ital-Swiss Dixieland blues punk)

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Ugly Things Magazine*. Every new issue means automatic #1 on my Top 5 list!
2. Nashville Ramblers, "The Trains" b/w "Fragile Child" 7". I must thank Ugly Things (and Frank Yar) for this too!
3. Krista Muir, *Between Atoms* CD
4. Garagehangover.com
5. Shannon And The Clams, *Sleep Talk* CD

Nighthawk

- Underground Railroad To Candyland at Lucky Gator Loft at 4:30 AM, 5/29/2011
- In Defence, *Party Lines and Politics* CD
- The Marked Men at The Empty Bottle, 5/28/2011
- Turnstile Comix #1: *The Slow Death 7"* and comic book
- MU330 at The Firebird, 6/11/2011

Paul Comeau

1. Fucked Up, *David Comes To Life 2 x LP*
2. Fucked Up, *David's Town* LP
3. Youth AVOIDERS / Zombies Are Pissed!, Split 7"
4. Now Denial, *Fuck Now Denial 12"* EP
5. Confines, *Withdrawn 7"* EP

Rev. Nerb

- High Tension Wires, *Welcome New Machine* LP
- Wildebeests, *Gnuggets 2 x LP*
- Cute Lepers, *Adventure Time* LP

- Sticks & Stones, *Is It You?* b/w *Telling the Truth* 45
- Wrong Words, The, *What Went Wrong* b/w *Clock Keeps Ticking* 45

Sal Lucci

1. Flestones, *Pardon Us for Living But the Graveyard Is Full* DVD
2. Half Rats, live
3. Davila 666, *Tan Bajo* LP
4. Hunx And His Punx, *Too Young to Be in Love* LP
5. Dow Jones And The Industrials, *Can't Stand the Midwest 7"*

Sean Koepenick

- Top 5 Music Books I Have Recently Enjoyed*
1. Eddie Trunk's *Essential Hard Rock & Heavy Metal*
 2. *Hit the Ground Stumbling*, by Nate Gangelhoff (of Banner Pilot)
 3. *AC/DC: Maximum Rock & Roll*, by Murray Engleheart with Arnaud Durieux
 4. *What's Welsh For Zen?*, by John Cale
 5. *Down Thunder Road*, by Mike Appel

Steve Larder

1. Diet Pills, Self-titled LP
2. Bong, *Beyond Ancient Space*
3. Earth, *Angels of darkness, Demons of Light I*
4. Jex Thoth, Self-titled LP
5. Mellakka, *R.I.P. Recordings '84-96*

Rhythm Chicken

- Top 5 albums I've Been Playing in My Soup Bar During Open Hours!*
- Paul Revere and the Raiders, *The Legend of Paul Revere* (Disc 1, and sometimes Disc 2 if I feel like hearing "Indian Reservation")
 - Riverdales, Self-titled (because there's plenty of Chicago tourists up here)
 - Herb Alpert, *Greatest Hits*
 - Luna, *Romantica* (because I can see Lake Michigan glimmering in the summer sun from my deck, beer in hand)
 - Descendents, *Everything Sucks* (because I'm still punk rock, or so I like to think)

Replay Dave

- Future Virgins, *Western Problems* LP
- Against Me!, live at Common Grounds
- Ninja Gun, *Roman Nose 12"*
- Joe Lally, *Why Should I Get Used to It?* LP
- Witches, *Forever* LP

Russel Van Cleave

- Nick Lowe, *Pure Pop for Now People*
- Dark Rides 7"EP
- Peter Stubb, *Vol. II*
- Watershed, *Twister*
- Dirt Poor 7"EP

Ryan Horky

1. The Plurals, *The Plurals Today, The Plurals Tomorrow, A Futuroprospective* CD
2. Cannibal Corpse, *Eaten Back to Life* LP
3. King Sunny Ade, *Synchro System* LP
4. Dismemberment Plan, *Emergency and I* LP
5. Dan Padilla, *As the Ox Plows* LP

Ryan Leach

- Top 5 Records I Picked Up in New Zealand*
1. The Clean, *Boodle, Boodle*
 2. Toy Love, Self-titled
 3. Look Blue Go Purple, *Bewitched*
 4. *AK-79* compilation
 5. The Golden Boys, *Scorpion Stomp #2*

Steve Hart

- *5th Inning* by E Ethelbert Miller (book)
- Mind Spiders, *Mind Spiders*
- Dengue Fever, *Cannibal Fever*
- Al-Thawra, *Edifice*
- Born Without a Face, Discography

Todd Taylor

- The Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Knows Your Sins* LP
- *Hit the Ground Stumbling*, by Nate Gangelhoff (book) tie with *Flying Saucers Rock'n'roll: Conversations with Unjustly Obscure Rock'n'Soul Eccentrics: The Best of October* (book)
- High Tension Wires, *Welcome New Machine* LP
- Gateway District, *Perfect's Gonna Fail* LP
- Superchunk, *Majesty Shredding* LP
- Neighborhood Brats, Self-titled 1-sided EP

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 "U" Bands*
1. UK Subs (where else would I get the "Stranglehold" tag from?)
 2. U.S. Bombs
 3. Underground Railroad To Candyland
 4. Undertones
 5. U-Men

Vincent Battilana

- Terry Malts, *I'm Neurotic 7"*
- Nar live at The Hemlock Tavern
- Serge Gainsbourg, *Initials B.B.* LP
- English Singles, Terry Malts, Brilliant Colors, and 14 Iced Bears live at The Rickshaw Stop
- Chinese Telephones, *Democracy* LP



ABOLITIONIST:

At the Level of the Ear: 7"

Given the band name and picture of a kid bearing what looks like machete scars gracing the front cover, the go-to assumption was that this was gonna be a hardcore record. Instead, it's thinkin'-man's poppy punk, with catchy hooks, interesting arrangements and substantive lyrics, with the title track referencing the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Not coincidentally, a portion of the record's proceeds benefit Partners In Health, which, this says, is helping Rwanda recover from that very dark period in its history. —Jimmy Alvarado (Abolitionist, abolitionist1859.com)

ALEX CUERVO: 4-song: 7"EP

Singer, guitarist, and one of the main songwriters for the Hex Dispensers does some solo work. While the Hex Dispensers conjure banshees, Alex summons quieter, more conversational ghosts and languid spirits. The songs are reverby. There are trebly effects over his voice and he's backed by electronic keyboards and/or drum machining. Alex is spooky in a haunted, thoughtful way, not a photocopied comic book rendering of the Danzig playbook. There are no skeleton gloves fingered into in the making of this record or "whoah ohs!" instead of choruses. It's more like a broken-legs-barely-healed waltz. Smooth and animated and swaying at the same time. —Todd (Trouble In Mind, troubleinmindrecs@gmail.com)

AMATEUR PARTY:

Truncheons in the Manor: LP

Rapid punk with clean guitars, melodic vocals, and touches of new wave, indie pop, and post-hardcore. This owes a lot to Ted Leo. It sounds like a less-precious Chisel or a rawer Pharmacists, but is done with enough thought and spike to stand on its own. Vocalist/guitarist Mike McKee was in the political hardcore band Kill The Man Who Questions and his lyrics are still in the topical storytelling style of turn-of-the-millennium DIY hardcore. He takes out drunk yuppies and lousy jobs in a way that makes the gray area between personal and political grow romantic and accessible. You find yourself along for the ride, rolling along on a wave of catchiness. —CT Terry (Rorschach)

ANTI-SEEN: *Sweet Blood Call: 7"*

After the piles and piles of 7"s ANTI-SEEN released over the years, do you really need one more in your collection? Yes, you do. Revitalized by a new bass player and drummer, Charlotte mainstays ANTI-SEEN are better than ever with this new record. Yet another accomplishment in

RECORD REVIEWS



"They get in the office and get to business, then go home."

—Speedway Randy
BRAIN F#: So Dim: 7"

their unique repertoire. This fancily packaged 7" comes with a download card for the digital geek in the house and boasts two tracks, "Sweet Blood Call" and ANTI-SEEN's version of the classic "Black Eyed Susie." The latter of the two tracks features Joe Buck, who adds to the stellar mix of ANTI-SEEN's rendition of the familiar old time song. Already a staple in their live sets, the recorded version of "Black Eyed Susie" does not disappoint. No one's getting a black eye after gifting this record. —Art Ettinger (Rusty Knuckles, rustyknucklesmusic.com)

ASSHOLEPARADE/SLIGHT SLAPPERS: Split: LP

Because so many of us here at *Razorcake* have already proclaimed our love for Assholeparade, I will only say that their side of this split won't disappoint you one bit if you're hip to their jazz. Sometimes, when all you know how to do is thrash, that's exactly what you should keep doing. So let's focus a bit more on Tokyo, Japan's Slight Slappers. A band you might not be too familiar with since a large part of their catalog is available exclusively only in Japan. They've been together for about seventeen years and counting. Even more impressive is that they have kept the same lineup since their first record. Comparing them to any of the more influential Japanese hardcore

bands would be underselling them a bit. Sure they draw from their forefathers like Gauze and Lip Cream. But then again, neither of those bands dared to put a dance/techno song at the end of any of their records or goofy vocals in any of their songs. Speed and noise are definitely part of the equation here. To the untrained ear, it may come across as a blur of indiscernible sounds and screaming. I would say it's the psychedelic equivalent of a Crossed Out record. In fact, I'd speculate as far as to say that the boys in Slight Slappers might be using some consciousness-enhancing drugs during their recording sessions, but it's not doing any harm to the creative process. If you're reading this in America, you're so lucky No Idea is a reliable source for this record and others by Assholeparade. Good luck tracking down Slight Slappers releases, though. —Juan Espinosa (No Idea)

BAD BANANA: *Cry About It: 7"*

No irony should be lost on the spirit duplicated (also known as dittoed) covers in all their mauveine beauty. The music is endearing and catchy, rollicking and inquisitive. Indie in that way that it's comfortably soft and punk in that way that you know they aren't fucking around. Features Katie and Allison from P.S. Eliot playing guitar and switching off on vocal duties. Highly advised. —Daryl (Puzzle Pieces)

BAG OF GREMLINS:

Welcome to Earth: 7" EP

Ridiculously fast hardcore delivered with enough stops, tempo shifts, and surgical precision to keep you on your toes. Definitely not for the faint of heart. —Jimmy Alvarado (Speaks Volumes, speaksvolumesrecords.com)

BASTARDS OF YOUNG / SUCCESS!: *Yeah Buddy! Split Series Volume 1: 7"*

This is the first release from La Escalera Records, the new label formed by longtime friends of mine and veterans of the San Diego Music scene Will Castro (B Street Hill screen printing, the band Threefoot) and Ziggy Pelayo (about a thousand local bands and Another Zeke Productions). The two of them do a lot of good things for music in San Diego and are quite earnest and sincere in their desire to keep San Diego a healthy and vibrant community for music, so I wish them both the best with the label and hope this is the first of many releases for them. On to the music...Side A belongs to Bastards Of Young, a band that I had never really listened to before, but was familiar with since another friend, Christopher Mason, put out some of their records on his own label, Swagger City. What I hear here I like. It reminds me a fair amount of some of the early-to mid-'90s bands that straddled the punk and indie lines, like Samiam and Seaweed. A couple of nice tunes here. As far as Success! goes, I'm not sure this is what they're going for, but to me the songs here remind me of the kind of band you'd see pop up in an old surf or skate video comp, right between tracks by Lagwagon and Unwritten Law. Not exactly my bag. If you're looking for a double-sided slice of '90s nostalgia, this record will gladly satisfy your cravings. —Jeff Proctor (La Escalera)

BEAR TRAP: *Nailed Shut: EP*

Ker-fuckin'-pow! This record is great! Bear Trap crank out some heavy and fast hardcore; hitting hard as hell on all fronts. Every single song is full-on. They have the right amount of low end to give the music a crushing weight and the singer sounds like he's near rabid. The songs race by in a near blur, and they crack the odometer in the speed rating. Sixteen blasts of pure aggression. I wonder how these guys are live. Do they play with the same intensity, from song to song without a break? Bring the band to California please! —M.Avrq (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

BEER & CABLE: *Self-titled 7" EP*

Concept records, let alone concept bands, are hard to pull off without looking like a ninny or ending up with something, oh, less than stellar. That said, these

RAZORCAKE RECORD REVIEW GUIDELINES AND FAQs

- The address to send all review material is *Razorcake*, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. You may address it to specific reviewers. Just make sure they're active.

- Full album art is required for a review. Pre-releases go into the trash. Don't treat us like second-rate citizens. We're all volunteers here.

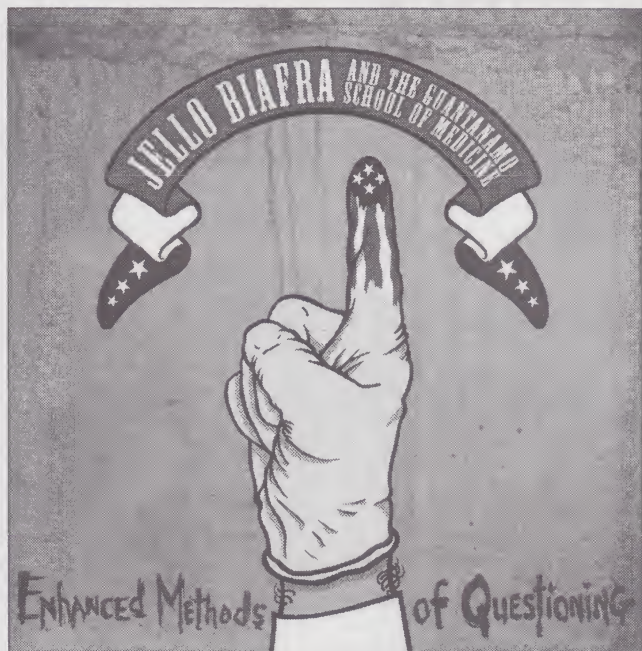
- Are you really sending us a download card or a link to review? Seriously? That's weak. Many of our contributors don't have fancy computers. Nope, we won't review 'em.

- You're sending us a CD-R of a piece of vinyl you're releasing to cut on costs? Please don't pull that stunt with us. We know mail's expensive, but we send full copies of the zine as a thanks to all who send us material to review (if your address is provided).

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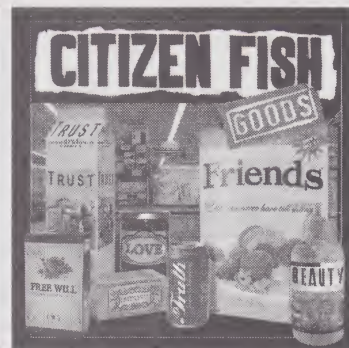


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"People involved with this label are fucking idiots"
-Eric from O'Pioneers



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guys manage to pull both off and come out the other end relatively unscathed. They're essentially a hardcore band whose interests here are limited solely to the pursuits referenced in their name, and there is no shortage of discussion here of either. This could've been one big stupid mess, but they're luckily blessed with solid tunes and they deliver 'em with skill. Will this change the world and bring peace to all nations? Probably not, but I can totally get behind the sentiments expressed in "Some People Don't Deserve Cable." —Jimmy Alvarado (Beer & Cable, myspace.com/beerandcable)

BIG CRUX: *Big Funk: 7"*

Give me half an hour and I wouldn't be anywhere close to telling you how fantastic the Big Boys were. Big Crux hold the Big Boys in the same high esteem. Funk punk is such a double diamond-dangerous slippery slope into a world where people wear *Cat in the Hat* hats and wiggle glow sticks above their heads. Big Crux have got the chops and the heart to make me fondly remember the Big Boys, much like Giant Haystacks did for the Minutemen. Not a rip. Not a photocopy. An homage, a new take, and songs that stand on their own if you've never hear of the Big Boys. Tim Kerr did the fantastic cover art. —Todd (Iron Lung, lifeironlungdeath.blogspot.com, bigcrux@gmail.com, ironlungrecords@hotmail.com)

BIG FUCKIN SKULL: *Skulls Rule – O.K?: CD*

It seems somehow appropriate that I'm listening to *Skulls Rule – O.K?* and

writing this review on May 21st, just before 6:00 PM—the day and time picked by God Expert Harry Camping for the Rapture to occur. Big Fuckin Skull is also very concerned with apocalyptic visions, though their version of the End Time is very different from the Good Reverend's. Instead of a peace-loving hippie coming down to Earth to move his dedicated flock to a dee-lux apartment in the sky, the eschatologists in BFS envision a homicidal snapping turtle of an enormous skull that comes to Earth to devour humans like so many Hot Pockets stuffed with blood and guts, stopping only briefly to pick the arms and legs out of its teeth. And as I sit here, so close to Judgement Day, I can't help but wonder: What Would Jesus Do if he found me here at Rapture Time listening to Big Fuckin Skull? For one thing, Jesus might not care for the salty language used by lead vocalist Rafe Torso in every single line of every single song on this disc. Mr. Torso is without question the King of the F-Bomb, far surpassing even greats like Casey Kasem and ex-Vikings coach Jerry Burns. Musically, Big Fuckin Skull is not something that Rev. Camping is likely to cotton to either. It's like the bastard spawn of Danzig and street punk, with compressed metal-sounding guitars, oddly happy-go-lucky melodies, Misfits-style "whoa-oh-oh" choruses and an unflagging, OCD-like obsession with blood-thirsty, rampaging winged skulls. After one listen you'll wonder if there ever has been a band whose name so completely and utterly

encapsulates not only the spirit of the band but their entire lyrical output as well. Possibly Jud-Jud. But is BFS's menacing stance to be feared or laughed at? I think I know how my mom would answer that, but I think they tip their hand when they lyrically reference "Ernest" of *Hey Vern, It's Ernest* fame. Plus, their skulls all have eyebrows and in the Skull World that's akin to wearing those plastic penis-nose glasses. So how serious can they really be about trying to be scary? Some people might dismiss this band as sophomoric Misfits-aping, a mere attempt to out-Misfits the Misfits. And there is some undeniable truth to that. BFS is to the Misfits and Samhain what Guitar Wolf is to the Ramones. They both take the older bands' already existing cartoonishness and turn it up so many more notches and in a manner so breathtakingly immature, it's a thing of disgusting beauty. So if you decide to pick up a copy of *Skulls Rule – O.K?* just be aware that the chances are very good that your girlfriend is going to hate, hate, HATE this with all her *American Idol*-loving guts. And friends will probably think you're a halfwit with questionable tastes for listening to it. Owning this CD, you're likely to be regarded with the same dim view given to someone harboring fugitives—because you'll swear this was done by a bunch of antisocial miscreants locked away in a juvie hall somewhere on grave robbing and necrophilia charges. But I'll say this for Big Fuckin Skull: they are so unapologetically and unflinchingly tasteless and unconcerned with being

perceived as "out of step" or "lowbrow" that it borders on genuine sociopathy. And I tip my devilock to them for that. If William Blake was right about the "road of excess leading to the palace of wisdom," then there's something very fucking wise happening here. And in our world currently weighted down with gigantic planet-engulfing turd-pies like Reverend Camping and Justin Bieber, it is wisdom badly fucking needed. —Aphid Peewit (bigfuckinskill.net)

BIRTHDAY SUITS:

The Minnesota: Mouth to Mouth: LP

Birthday Suits are a guitar and drums two-piece who do a lot with a little. The songs storm around from bratty shout-a-longs, to tongue-in-cheek rawkness, to the types of noodles that two friends come up with when screwing around in the garage. The whole record is super duper high energy and has that intangible quality where you can tell that they had a blast recording it. I'd love to see these guys live. Props for naming a song "Kinnickinnic." I was just on that road in Milwaukee! Ex-members of Sweet JAP. —CT Terry (Learning Curve)

BLACK MARKET BABY: *DSR 126: 7" EP*

This is a repress of this venerable DC band's first single, originally released on Limp and reissued and expanded here. Side one features the original tracks, "Potential Suicide" and "Youth Crimes," while side two boasts live versions of "America's Youth" and "Killing Time." Those not familiar with this band's brand of mid-tempo

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punk/hardcore will find this serves as a nice taste tester, but be forewarned that it will result in your procuring and repeatedly playing their retrospective CD, *Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda*, until your pogo is pooped and your slam is, uh, slammed. These cats remain more than deserving of every accolade that's been hurled in their direction, and then some. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

BLACK WINE: *Dark Energy*: EP

Imagine bands like late-period Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and early Soul Asylum mixed with the Plimsouls. "Pick at the Pieces" starts off the record with a decent rock vibe, then "Yr Light" changes the mood and flow from the previous song. The tempo is stop-go. The cover of Jethro Tull's "Locomotive Breath" is filler. —MAVRG (Don Giovanni, dongiovannirecords.com)

BLIND SHAKE, THE: *Seriousness*: CD

Stomping, bristling, bruising future primitivism with reverby, surfy, salty, windswept flourishes. They're from the Midwest, so perhaps one of the first bands to meld surf sounds inside of hurricanes? The Blind Shake conjure up a future that's failing, decaying, and breaking off in chunks: waves swelling with broken promises and chunks of TVs; cinematic rusty circuit boards of songs that are anxious, melodically abrasive, and lurking. The overall impression of *Seriousness* is a *Brazil*-style foreboding that all of these "technological advancements" are entrapments in alluring disguises

and we're listening to culture seriously rend itself apart. Great. If Servotron was that band that waged a war against humans, The Blind Shake are the shock troops. —Todd (Learning Curve)

BOTOX RATS / MODERN ACTION: *Split*: 7"

In a split offering between two bands whose names were apparently chosen by picking a pair of random punk words out of a hat, Botox Rats make a fairly impressive showing by following a "Nervous Breakdown" riff with four measures of completely unexpected two-note saxophone, followed in turn by a song-long barrage of lunatic brain-damaged neo-Bob Stinson guitar lead wanking, because, you know, they feel things deeply and shit ((Bob Stinson continues to droolingly wail throughout the entirety of the song, which is good as far as communicating to the listener that WE ARE HERE TO ROCK AND SO ARE YOU, DAMMIT, although every so often you'd like to cuff him upside the head and make him cease for a tad)). While outright originality is perhaps not the band's province, they do throw enough nifty bits in here, kitchen-sink style ((female backing vocals! Changing up the last note of the melody! Egads!)), that you gotta kinda admit it's snottily impressive. Modern Action—presumably the sugar daddies behind this release—fare worse, with some kinda half-hearted anthem that doesn't seem to know if it wants to titillate Earth's latest soccer hooligan molecule or be a filler track on the *Mr. Beautiful*

Presents ALL HARD compilation album. Packaged in a silkscreened brown paper bag for your protection. **BEST SONG:** Botox Rats, "Nasty Business" **BEST SONG TITLE:** Modern Action: "Drink To Win" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** This record comes on some kind of taffy colored vinyl but i am having a hard time isolating the flavor. —Rev. Nørb (Modern Action)

BOYISH CHARMS, THE: *Infinity in Its Infancy*: LP

Boyish Charms is San Diegan Robbie Lawson (ex-Red Pony Clock) and Angeleno Cam Jones (ex-Finches). The two of them have built up a cult audience through the release of limited run cassettes and 7"s of bedroom recordings, with a sporadic show here and there over the last ten years or so. This new album is a bit of a departure and, perhaps, maturation of their sound. Where before I found the songs were a little too much guy-with-acoustic-guitar for me, they benefit from the assistance of playing with a full band, as well as the production of Roy Silverstein of Habitat Studios. The songs now show off with more vim and vigor than previous releases. They haven't gone all Motörhead on us or anything, but they bring to mind quite nicely the catalog of grown-up punks cum indie rockers such as Pavement or Sebadoh. Naturally fluid vocals that show off wide range from both Robbie and Cam are excellent. There are also lots of buried layers. I recommend listening with headphones to pick up the flourishes of handclaps, cello, vibraphone, and

other sonic surprises. This is a really great listen beginning to end. This comes with the highest recommendation. —Jeff Proctor (Talking Helps)

BRAIN F≠: *So Dim*: 7"

Guy-guitar girl-drums duo both singing dirty rad punk fucking rock. Real urgency inside the fuzz here. Back and forth singing works. Feedback with a good pounding speed. Brain F≠ (too sleepy right now to figure out the name) doesn't invent anything, just rips. Two smoking songs here. They get in the office and get to business, then go home. —Speedway Randy (Grave Mistake)

BRAIN KILLER:

***Every Actual State Is Corrupt*: LP**

D-beat-influenced hardcore is nothing new. In fact, a new band seems to sprout every other month stateside. What Brain Killer brings to the table is far from dismissible. There are some great spoken word parts leading into each side of the record. The noisy feedback complements the crushing heaviness of the guitars very nicely. Not to mention the songs compositions; they're completely fresh and unpredictable (something that d-beat is not particularly known for.) Fans of noisy Japanese hardcore like Nightmare should give this a close listen. —Juan Espinosa (Deranged)

BRICKWAR: *Warpath E.P.*: 2 x 7"

Who the hell do these guys think they are to trick me like that? When I see a band dressed in chain mail and packing swords on the sleeve, the last

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thing I'm expecting to hear is raw, early new wave rockers with a touch of Mudhoney-like grime. I really dig what's going on here. Catchy stuff with lots of weirdness everywhere. I woulda come up with a better cover, though. —Ty Stranglehold (Savage)

BUMBKLAATT: *Luctus*: LP

On the newest full-length from these Tijuana/Chula Vista hardcore heroes, Bumbkläatt doesn't disappoint. I've long been impressed by the sheer ferocity and intensity of the band. Precision, speed, and volume coalesce in to one of the most bad-assed, rippingest, slayingest bands of the genre and it's all on display for you here. And, what's more, the band is reunited with former member Fernando Cruz (Run For Your Fucking Life, Sleepwalkers R.I.P.) which is really nice to see. The record itself is on a platter of red and black swirled vinyl. The album artwork and album sleeve is remarkable on its own, designed and screened by drummer and vocalist Adrian Balderrama. All in all it's a great package, lovingly and painstakingly created hardcore brilliance and released on the band's own label, Ratpaste. —Jeff Proctor (Ratpaste)

BURNING SENSATIONS: *Self-titled*: LP

Whoa! Such a great record! Starts off as a standard hardcore record. The first few songs are short and thrashy numbers. Then they switch things up with "Weeping Wound." Still lightening fast, but more tuneful. Reminds me of early Wipers crossed with The Proletariat.

Not shabby at all. In fact, I hear a lot of The Proletariat in their sound. Not a direct copy, but the influence is there in the atmospheric sound and vocal delivery. "Kitchen Knife" has a post punk beginning before ripping into a straight-up thrash killer: stop-go tempos, fast and chaotic, and urgent. "I Wonder" is a definite stand out. Very tuneful, mid-tempo, and a bit different compared to the rest of the tracks. A bit power pop, yet they don't miss a beat between the more punk songs. If anything, the contrasting styles only serve to strengthen one another. A record you would be wise to be pick up, play repeatedly, and have a smidge more class than most everyone else as a result. —M.Avrq (Vertex, vertexaudio@gmail.com)

BUST!: *Suck Kuts*: 10" EP

This two-piece from the Chicago suburbs juggles familiar sounds and makes them sound fresh and interesting, much more so than many of their contemporaries in the melodic hardcore and pop punk scenes. This is my first introduction to the band and the first band that comes to mind is Dillinger Four. The songs have similar pacing, expressive guitar, and the flat, galloping bass tuned to a rhythmic thud. The bass I'm curious about since it's a two-piece and I'm assuming it's just a guitar and drums at the shows, but who knows? There's also an angularity to the guitar and an energy to the vocals that distinguishes it from D4, something akin to Rick Froberg's work in Drive Like Jehu. —Jeff Proctor (Cassette Deck)

CARNIVORES: *"German Flower" b/w "Sense of Dread"*: 7"

A tip of the hat is always necessary when songs can seem so cluttered and so catchy at the same time. Carnivores packs these tracks with all kinds of change ups and left-field interferences, but they still nail those hooks! Somewhat psychedelic, all-out garage rock. Two short and pleasantly unnerving cuts. —Daryl (Dirt Cult)

CHARLEY HORSE:

Professional Sinners: LP

A lot of the country revival produced by hard rockers comes across as a little affected to me. While it's not my bag, *Professional Sinners* comes across as a sincere effort. The band can play and the record is well produced. The songs have a range of rockabilly and hard country influences and go beyond learning a few chords and whining about drinking. I would think those into later Social Distortion would enjoy this. —Billups Allen (Ratchet Blade, ratchetbladerecords.com)

CONFINES: *Withdrawn*: 7" EP

The sheer intensity of this band may blow your mind, or your speakers. Featuring members of some of the best bands out of Boston/Mass in the last decade, Confines play angry, driving, political hardcore with lots of guitar wankery and some catchy melodic riffage, usually at breakneck speed. Guitarist Ryan Abbott absolutely shreds on every song, and PJ Kuda on drums tears up his kit with the brutal ferocity.

Thankfully, Jamie Jones on bass holds things together as Andrew Jackmauh screams like a banshee over everything. If fast and thrashy hardcore punk is your thing, check this out immediately. It rips! —Paul J. Comeau (Labor Of Love)

CONVERGE / DROPDEAD: *20 Years: Split*: 7"

One track each by these titans of hardcore. It blows my mind to think that these bands have been around for twenty years, but this split proves that both are as relevant as ever. Little can be said about Converge that hasn't been said elsewhere. Punishingly fast and unflinchingly in your face, their track "Runaway," is the band at their noisy, dissonant, best. "Paths of Glory," is the first new DropDead recording in seven years, and the band is still pissed, still political, and still knows how to rage. Blasting out at blistering speed, the song is a little over a minute of pure punk/hardcore adrenaline. This is a must have for fans of either band, and, hopefully, a taste of more to come. —Paul J. Comeau (Armageddon Label)

COYOTE SLINGSHOT/ CAUTION (COMMA) LEMMY: *Jumping Fences with the Roadkill*: Cassette

This is a split tape by two bands that are well suited to the lo-fi format. Coyote Slingshot sounds like the Misfits crossed with cheesy Halloween music (think "Monster Mash"). Their songs are synth-y and fun, but they also have an ominous snare drum beat that echoes that hollow-y Misfits sounds.



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Caution (Comma) Lemmy dishes out some equally creepy noise on their side of the tape. Their instruments are distorted beyond recognition, sounding something like helicopters and sirens. Amidst all the chaos, this could be a post-apocalyptic radio broadcast. —Lauren Trout (Sweat Power, Sweatpowerrecords.com)

CREDENTIALS, THE: *Goocher*: LP

Breathless, dark-bagged eyes insomnia music focused on the smallpox blanket of contemporary popular American culture. Lots-of-fast-words, politically-tinged pop punk. *Goocher* has the feeling of standing ten feet away from a roaring-by train. At first listen, it was hard to separate the individual cars rushing by. They're along the line of a smarter, crustier, class-conscious, less "street," more "dumpster and feminism" Rancid? So sorta like Fifteen? A speeded-up Rivethead—so, like 45 to a 78? Somewhere in that Bermuda triangle of possibilities. What I'm rubbing my head over is how blurry it is, like how so many of the songs don't breathe. So when the breakdowns and semi-pauses—the semicolons instead of !, !, !'s all the time—like in "Younger Kids" and the intro to "Stealers Keepers" really stood out. Comes with a full-sized newspaper zine lyric sheet and one of the longest thank you lists I've seen in a long time. (Bummer to the single person who got marked out.) Thick fuckin' vinyl. Promising. —Todd (It's Alive / Dirt Cult / 86'd / Muy Autentico)

CULO: *Toxic Vision*: 7" EP

Hooo doggy, this is one helluva record. Spastic hardcore in spades here, with tempos bouncing from one end of the spectrum to the other and back again, often in the same song. Angry, short, and brilliant in ways that only those who appreciate hardcore will truly get. Believe me when I say this is one o' them pieces of wax folks'll be forking over large wads of cash for when it becomes scarce. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

CURMUDGEON:

Human Ouroboros: Cassette

This Boston-based outfit plays heavy, face-pummeling '80s hardcore with political lyrics. Featuring ex-Ripshit vocalist Krystina Krysiak tearing it up on the mic, Curmudgeon are everything you could want in a band of this style: Tons of low end, some blastbeats, plenty of breakdowns, and the occasional sing-along. "Shut Out," and "Spineless," are my favorite tracks, both because of how epic they rage and because of their strong lyrical content. Go download this already! —Paul J. Comeau (Curmudgeon, curmudgeon.bandcamp.com)

CUTE LEPERS, THE: *Adventure Time*: CD

Late '70s-inspired power/punk, not unlike the Marked Men, Reigning Sound, or even a lot like Rocket From The Crypt when the horns come in. Some of the songs run a little long for my attention span, but it's still pretty great. Even if you're not into this kind of stuff normally, it's worth looking into. —Joe Evans III (1-2-3-4 Go!)

DAMN LASER VAMPIRES:

Three-Gun Mojo: CD

Very Cramps influenced. The musicianship is pretty good. Surf, rockabilly, and blues all thrown in the blender. When I first heard this, I didn't really like it much. Subsequent listens has made me appreciate it more. I hear more nuances than the last listen. I can appreciate where they're going with this. Like I said at the beginning, they have a definite Cramps influence. But then they add some darker touches. I hear a bit of Nick Cave in the sound. I like the clean guitar sound quite a bit. It's as if Dick Dale decided to join a shockabilly band. The songs move more at a cool pace than with wild abandon. They go a little wild on "Greets the Gang." "Creepy Thing" is a stand out on here. It has a nice lurking tempo and a great guitar break that puts a little light in the murk. Also, really like "Hit Me Like a Man." Sounds like the perfect song for driving across the desert. Wide open, sweeping, and still cool. "The Mo" sounds like something that should have been in a David Lynch film. Spidery guitar sound, shambling rhythm, and a sax to give more color. —M.Avrq (Terrotten, terrotten.com)

DEAD DOG: *Don't Touch Me*: LP

This record see-saws between weird/not weird. It's energetic, and just-this-side-of-spastic. It's got that fast-coasting, hands-off-handlebars downhill speed of Asheville's Dead Things; the crunchy, shardy, broken lollipop of punk and pop that Hunchback sucked on; and the

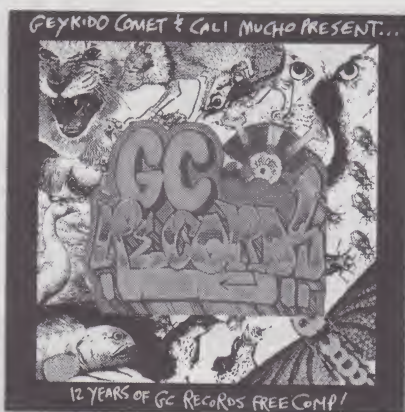
ragged and tattered glory of Allergic To Bullshit. It all adds up to a charm sum greater than the parts. Repeated listens verify that there's some undeniable songcraft underneath. It helps that the production's not tarded up to be anything except fuckin' awesome DIY punk songs. —Todd (Let's Pretend / deaddeaddog@gmail.com)

DEATH DEALERS: *Files of Atrocity*: CD

Remember when you first listened to Doom's *Monarchy Zoo*? How it kicked your ass from one end of the room to the next, and you laughed like a maniac the whole time because you could not believe anything could be this good? Well, Death Dealers do much of the same thing here. Members of Extreme Noise Terror with Charlie Claeson from Anti-Cimex on drums. Even better than I was anticipating. Starts off with some ear-splitting distortion and feedback. Right there, a good sign, and then it's a motherfucker of a hell ride from there on out. Even the bomb blasts in "Fix to Feed" are awesome. "Blinded by Fame" would make even the most reluctant listener of heavy crust move their ass in the name of rock. The sound is heavy, charging like mad, and the guitar on here sounds killer. —M.Avrq (Farewell)

DEATH FIRST: *Trapped*: 7" EP

Loud, angry hardcore with a big, anthemic sound. The lyrics are topical, addressing punk trends, emotional blackmail, weekend politicians, and the need to continue disaster aid when



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all the cameras have gone home. —Jimmy Alvarado (Destroy Me, destroymererecords.blogspot.com)

DEEP SLEEP: *Turn Me Off: 12" EP*

Hey, who put All into my hardcore? Deep Sleep. It's noodly, but the noodles are kept in the bowl of the song (and aren't at the top of the mix). Deep Sleep's abrasive, like how sandpaper takes the burrs off, but the result's a smooth finish that shows off the natural wood grain. Burly, with a purpose, without being unwieldy. Heavy without being "tough." Deep Sleep are movers who clear out an entire truck in record time without chipping a single dish or dinging a chair leg. There's something gratifying about listening to a band that's getting the job done so efficiently and crisply. —Todd (Grave Mistake)

DESPISE YOU / AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED: *And On and On: Split: LP*

The release of this record is as monumental to me as the first time I (or anyone) saw Despise You perform live at Murderfest '07. That might not sound like a big deal but in case you didn't know, prior to that show, DY existed only on recordings between the years of '94 and '97. Fake band member names, interviews, and show fliers added to the confusion amongst many of their fans (myself included) and peers in the scene. Their records eventually became obscure collectors items and a partial discography, *Westside Horizons*, became a cult classic as the band's fate appeared to have been sealed when a split with

Man Is The Bastard never materialized. Sure, it's a bummer to think of what might have been, but you'll be glad to know that they picked up right where they left off—and with a suitable partner in Agoraphobic Nosebleed. If you loved DY's classics, then you should have no problem enjoying these eighteen brand new tracks of the same brand of thrashy hardcore that they built a reputation on. Still fucking bleak, brutal, and fast. There's also a cover of Fear's "I Don't Care About You" just to show you where they're coming from. Agoraphobic Nosebleed have also created quite a name for themselves in the extreme music world, though it's debatable whether it's a name to be praised or shunned. Still no drummer in place of the drum machine, but the songwriting is still excellent as Scott Hull doesn't seem to run out of riffs to manipulate. ANB doesn't seem to rely on speed (the musical kind, that is) as much as they did in their earlier days, but don't kid yourself, shit's still fierce. It's fairly typical of Jay Randall to conjure up lyrical diarrhea, but this time around the lyrics are not as offensive. Still, that doesn't mean that they haven't or won't be again. But, hey, Randall couldn't have been more right on with these lines: "Get pissed—throw the disc in the trash? But the Despise You side is where it's at." Amen to that. —Juan Espinosa (Relapse, relapse.com)

DEZERTER:

Prawo Do Bycia Idiota: CD+DVD

Poland's Dezerter plays straightforward, no-frills, no-nonsense punk rock,

and I found their tunes to be highly satisfying. While I'm trying hard to make fewer "sounds like" comparisons these days, these guys remind me a lot of Straightjacket. Dezerter's riffs have a bit of a staccato feel to them, and the harmonies between the guitars and vocals are really good—all of the songs are sung in Polish, but it didn't matter that I couldn't understand the words because the vocals blended well with the music. For the record, English translations are provided for all twelve songs, and the lyrical content is fairly standard twenty-first century punk rock fare, but there are some interesting intellectual twists. I don't have a review of the DVD at this time because I was gonna watch it sometime in the next twelve hours, but I've gotta drive nine hundred miles to a funeral instead. Watch for it next time, if you're interested. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Mystic [not the Mystic of Super 7" fame])

DIE DIE DIE: *Forms: CD*

These guys are from New Zealand and are really well known for their energetic live shows more so than their recorded output. An old band of mine was on a sparsely attended show with them a few years back in Austin where they played their brand of noisy post punk to a crowd of about ten people. Despite this fact, they still played with the intensity of a band playing a packed show. Listening to this record now, I would never have guessed that it was the same band. *Forms* dives

much deeper into an indie rock realm from what I remember, reminding me a lot of the newer records by New York indie darlings Les Savy Fav, if those records were showered in reverb and given a less prominent vocalist. The guitars are not as noisy as they used to be, instead infusing a greater sense of melody throughout. I suppose it's a pleasant record to listen to, but it's just not very exciting. —Mark Twistworthy (Flying Nun, flyingnun.co.nz)

DOGHOUSE LORDS:

Diggin' at the Doghouse: CD

The good: A few members of some better known groups (namely the Blasters and the Cramps) get together to mine some choice rootsy sounds that sound more informed by the dark, swamp-soaked bluesy glory of bands like early Gun Club and Poison 13 than their own back catalogues. The bad: The sequencing of the tracks is such that the lion's share of the moodier pieces are within the first six tracks and the Texas-steeped floor scorers are within the last six, making for a release that (dunno if it's intentional or not) is more like two different releases than a cohesive whole. The relief: Hitting "random" on the CD player fixes up that last issue quite nicely. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ratchet Blade)

DWARVES: *Are Born Again: CD*

After the Dwarves were sentenced to die on their last outing, 2004's *The Dwarves Must Die*, we all knew that it would only be a matter of time before they were reanimated. Well the wait

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was a little longer than usual, but the almighty Dwarves are back and born again. The amazing thing about the Dwarves is their amazing ability to cross styles and genres with ease. That said, it seems that perhaps they were spreading themselves too thin on the last couple of releases. A little too much experimentation, and not enough *Blood, Guts, and Pussy* perhaps? Well, I'm happy to report that the Dwarves have in fact been born again into the world of depraved punk rock insanity. There isn't any foray into hip-hop on this one, just a great balance of melodic mastery and pornographic alchemy delivered at break neck speed. Twenty-one songs that traverse all aspects of the Dwarves world. Sex, drugs, violence... Would you expect anything else? The lyrical content is heinous, for sure, but the most evil trick that Blag and company pull is their ability to make them so catchy that they can't help but stick in your head. In the end, if you like the Dwarves, you'll like this. If you don't, you'll still hate them. —Ty Stranglehold (Greedy, thedwarves.com)

ELECTROCUTIONS, THE: *Forgotten City: 7"*

There's an early punk influence in there, but it veers less in the default directions of the Ramones and the New York Dolls, and more towards the slightly off-kilter vicinity of the taut English cluster of bands that ended up being the vanguard of post punk. The band's precision is impeccable, with barre chords sharing space with slashing guitar work, and an

almost military backbeat. Some solid work is in abundance here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Windian)

ELWAY: *Delusions: CD*

So here's the wildcard in the latest batch of records I got this month. This band comes out of the speakers and tugs at the old heartstrings while pummeling your eardrums. Crisp guitars, slippery bass, and in-your-face drums. Plus actual songwriting skills! Real vocals chock full of melody! It's so good I can't stop using exclamation points! You get the idea. This is worth checking out. Oh yeah, and if that loser ex-quarterback doesn't like the band name than go toilet paper his front lawn. That will learn him. —Sean Koeppenick (Red Scare)

ENDPROGRAM: *Balatus: CD*

Some decent metallic hardcore here, a bit one-dimensional in its delivery, but, on the whole, they're quite listenable. There's a long-winded bit included on the lyric sheet explaining their decision to utter one word out of the at least a hundred used over the course of five songs and, frankly, I don't know if their feeling the need to spend so much time justifying its use isn't more disturbing than the actual act of using it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Endprogram, theendprogram@live.ca)

EXTREME NOISE TERROR:

Phonophobia: CD

If you have yet to hear ENT, then this is the perfect place to start. I tend to think a lot of crustcore has a short shelf life. However, this album, *Phonophobia*, is

like a box of Twinkies. Ageless. Could survive a nuclear holocaust and still be fresh as the day it hit the racks. Originally released in 1991 and remastered recently, it still packs a powerful wallop. Just listen to "Third World Genocide." Starts off with heavy percussion that reminds me of Siouxsie And The Banshees, only faster and hell-bent. Then, kerblam! the guitars kick in and it's chaos supreme. This reissue also includes two unreleased tracks ("Commercial Suicide" and "Is This the Way?") from the same session, and a live recording from 1986. —M.Avr (Terrotten, terrotten.com)

FAMILY MAN: *Self-titled: CD*

Two albums for the price of one here, one from 2008 and the other from 2010. Both feature some top-tier, mostly mid-tempo hardcore, with a whiff of metal found in their love of the E chord, and well above average lyric writing. Dunno where they hail from—my guess would be somewhere in Germany, but I wouldn't lay any money down—but they more than handily deliver the fuggin' goods. Nice, sly homage to Black Sabbath's *Heaven and Hell* album on the back cover, too. —Jimmy Alvarado (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

FIGGS, THE: *Sucking in Stereo: LP*

Got a Figgs forty-five a while back that was pretty good, so it was a nice surprise to find this in my in-box. This is apparently a remastered reissue of an album they released a decade ago, available here on vinyl for the first time. It's clear very early on

here that these guys know their way around a hook, and they wield them well, slathering tune after tune with catchy bits culled from power pop influences and delivering them with a bit of punk conviction. Not a stinker in the bunch and a definite keeper to add to your party platter rotation. —Jimmy Alvarado (Peterwalkee, peterwalkeerecords.com)

FLESHTONES:


Brooklyn Sound Solution: CD

Goddamn, this band just keeps going, and I mean that in a good way. They've been around since 1976 and have been busy every year since. Twelve songs in just under thirty minutes. Featuring Lenny Kaye, y'know, the *Nuggets* guy, and recorded by Ivan Julian (Richard Hell And The Voidoids). Most of the songs are instrumentals (seven out of twelve), presumably to showcase Kaye's guitar. Highlight for your next party mix should be "I Can't Hide It." Kids today need to know The Flestones! —Sal Lucci (Yep Roc)

FOLDED SHIRT: *Self-titled: 12"*

After a sterling EP, these Cleveland mongoloids return with twelve black inches of musical fuckery. Never straight forward, or typical. Instead, they go to outer realms, make some noise, use children's instruments for color, assault the senses with hyper tempos, discordant breaks, odes to ice machines, and more. Not for the meek. —M.Avr (Fashionable Idiots, fashionableidiots.com)

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FROZEN TEENS / STREET LEGAL: Split: 7"

Frozen Teens: Somewhere between Onion Flavored Rings and Future Virgins on the pop punk spectrum. Definitely the biggest surprise I've had in a long time. Is it any surprise a band this good comes from Minneapolis? There must be something in the water up there. Street Legal: Pretty awesome hardcore. Reminds me slightly of This Is My Fist! mixed with Brutal Knights. All in all, very recommended. —Bryan Static (Shut Up)

FUCKED UP: David's Town: LP

Fucked Up has become known for their unique vinyl-only releases, and *David's Town*, is no exception. This is a concept record—with artwork making it look like a fake compilation—and the band doing garage rock in the personae of eleven bands. The fictional bands on this record are all from the fictional town Byrdesdale Spa, U.K.—setting for the narrative of their forthcoming LP *David Comes to Life*—with the title clearly a nod to the forthcoming LP. Keeping up the premise of a fake compilation, the eleven songs on this record all sound very different, recalling a slew of bands spanning the entire garage rock subgenre. Each song features a different vocalist or performer, with guest performances by Danko Jones, Dan Romano, The Cloud Nothings, and others. The songs are all catchy, with some great hooks and interesting riffs, each offering a distinct and unique sound, as though written by different bands—which is obviously the point.

Those who think Fucked Up is just another hardcore band won't really get this record, but that's okay, it's not for them. This record will appeal most to diehard Fucked Up fans, particularly those into their experimental side, and fans of garage rock. The curious should give this a try as well. They may be pleasantly surprised. —Paul J. Comeau (Matador)

FUTURE VIRGINS: Western Problem: LP

I spent a few years in college as a the music director for the local college rock station, and after countless hours of listening to new music in order to make the decision about whether to add new discs to our rotation, I got incredibly good at the "recommended if you like" section of our description page. Problem was, even though I could suggest to people, "you'll like this if you like that," it became more and more difficult to differentiate between "good" and "bad" music. For a period of time, I thought I'd lost my passion for music; it all just sounded derivative. I feel like a band like the Future Virgins would have snapped me out of that line of thinking pretty quickly had they existed back then. These guys knocked me on my ass with their first seven inch and nothing's changed with each subsequent release. This is probably the best DIY pop punk band in existence, and I don't apply such labels lightly. Perfect, passionate, and energetic songs that make me want to jump around my bedroom all night long with a huge smile on my face. I didn't expect this to

top their previous efforts, but I think it just might have! I dare someone to try to knock this out of its current "best record of 2011" position. —Chris Mason (Plan-It-X South/Starcleaner, plan-it-x.com, starcleaner.com)

GATEWAY DISTRICT: Perfect's Gonna Fail: LP

Throughout this review, just think "Really great punk pop, but so much more." Coming from America's Scandinavia, Gateway District are Midwestern poetic. Of being born into failing industrial towns, down to specific streets as familiar as veins on forearms. Compelling, bubbling harmonies and backing vocals. Dark skies. Long winters. A deep appreciation for spring and summer. Constant renewal. What gives Gateway District repeated listens is their yearning, their ontology. They're concerned and dealing with the nature of being; not just beers, breakups, boohoos, and yahoos! But some deep thinking and placement: "You think you've got it all figured out/ that's when the bottom drops out/ looking for perfect's gonna fail you." *Perfect's Gonna Fail* is an album that sounds like a shared relationship between four musicians. In fact, its strength is in the lattice of overlapping types of relationships the band examines: From memories of high school to the drifting-away of friends by the passage of time or time stolen away by addictions. Records like these make me proud to self-identify as a DIY punk. So smart, rockin', and meaningful. —Todd (It's Alive)

GET RAD:

Choose Your Own Adventure: 7" EP
Am I easily swayed by clever packaging? You bet your fuckin' life I am! As the title implies, the accompanying booklet features the exploits of Cru Jones, whose life is pretty crazy since he won Hellpath, and by making key decisions for him, you lead him towards either ruin or true love. The music? Rock-solid hardcore with the lyrics printed on the back page of the booklet for those not easily distracted, but shit, I've got more important things on my mind, namely trying to figure out why every decision I make seems to result in Cru's death. Creative, lots of fun, and, on the whole, a great listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (Halo Of Flies)

GOVERNMENT FLU:

Are You Sorry Now?: CD

Kickass Polish hardcore going whop upside yer head and doing so without resorting to silly-speed trickery or blustery metal blowhard bullshit. They come in, beat you senseless, and head out the back door, quick 'n' impolite-like. Fuckin' love that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

GRIM FANDAGO: Birthmark Blues: CD

A four-piece from Australia comes at you from different angles and throws a few curveballs here. I'm hearing Jawbox-like guitar with some Off With Their Heads-type vocals. I like some of the song titles like "Dirt Doesn't Need Luck" and "Horseland." These guys are earnest and you can tell they are serious about this endeavor. I endorse

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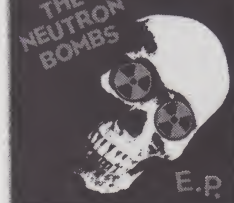


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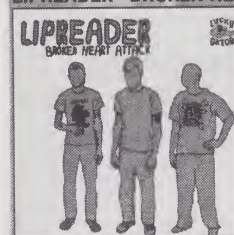
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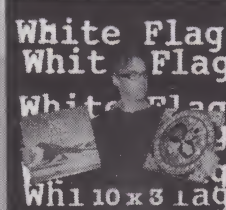


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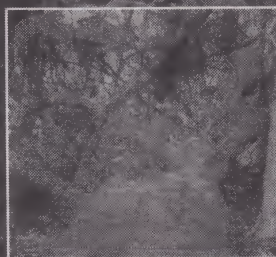
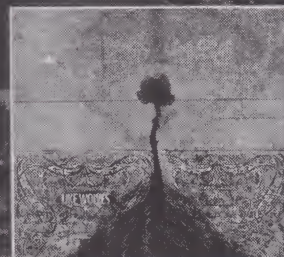
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this one and look for more sonic desserts from this band soon. —Sean Koeppen (Poison City)

HAPPY THOUGHTS, THE: Self-titled: CD

I reckon the foundation these kids are working from would be power pop, but the production has a raw, garagey feel to it, and the wisps of Teenage Fanclub and Jesus And Mary Chain that flutter around the edges would lead one to believe there's more happening than is apparent at first blush. The hooks are aplenty, and the whole package is definitely worth a listen. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

HIGH TENSION WIRES: Welcome New Machine: LP

One of the tenets of post-modernism is the lack of a center. What was on the outside one minute can be in the middle the next. It's flux, unpredictable movement, interchangeable parts, marbles rolling around in a box. Inside of atoms, we can either know where the electron is or where it's going. Not both at the same time. Same goes for what comes out of Denton, Texas and DIY punk rock. Put Mike Wiebe (Riverboat Gamblers, Chop Sakis) and Mark Ryan (the Marked Men proton in this example, since he's doing the recording, guitar, and some songwriting) in the same room. *Wha-bam!* Filtrate with both the tried and true formulae of Chris Pulliam (Reds [pre-Marked Men]). *Glug-glug, flash!* Then agitate, accelerate, and excite with Gregory Rutherford (Bad Sports)

and Daniel Fried (Wax Museums). *Ba-boom!* The result is something that Einstein, Picasso, Tim Kerr, and the Oblivians would all agree on. *Welcome New Machine* is perfect rock'n'roll for outcasts not looking for acceptance, fueled by an unquenchable thirst to keep making more music if others catch on or not. Shityeah. —Todd (Dirtmap)

HJERTESTOP: Musik for Dekadente Ører: 7"

If I didn't know better, I'd swear this was some long-lost '80s punk gem from Denmark. While it's a new release from a band with an inception that dates no farther back than 2004, it definitely has an '80s feel to it. You get two thrashers and two slower tunes in all here, all of them with a deceptive pop undertow that gives them a little something more to remember them by. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fashionable Idiots)

HUNX AND HIS PUNX: Too Young to Be in Love: LP

Ten catchy tunes, some bubblegum but mostly '60s girl group-influenced pop. I'd say it's even better than their previous LP (a comp of out of print, internet-expensive singles). Some of the shtick is dropped and songwriting seems to be the main focus. Lots of help from Shannon Shaw of Shannon And The Clams (check out her turn in "The Curse of Being Young"—goddamn!) Shaw's vocals are much stronger than Hunx's bratty whine and, on some songs, the backing vocals even overpower Hunx. If I have a complaint, I'd say that was

something that should have been fixed during mixing. —Sal Lucci (Hardly Art)

HYGIENE: Public Sector: LP
There is no doubt that Hygiene are in full control of their package. Music, artwork, references, matrix message, are all tightly considered. The music is cold, greyskied, blunt, restrained, artful. Repetitive. Mechanical. Grating and sparse with melodic, wiry guitar work. *Public Sector* sounds like dark, feet-in-thick-boots dancing music for Orwellian robots. It is very English, busted pipes, and rust-stained concrete. Lyrics largely deal with middle-management bureaucracy in a large organization. Think of fluorescent lights flickering—casting everything in a pale, bloodless light. For years at a time. For those who enjoy the dangerous black ice traversed by the Estranged and Total Control, Hygiene'll raise your banner and keep you in formation. Talented. —Todd (La Vida Es Un Mus, Paco@lavideesunmus.com)

IMPULSE INTERNATIONAL, THE: Mini Album: 10"

I feel like I'm starting to sound like a broken record talking about this band. But the truth is, the International Impulse do get better and better with every record. This really is their best record yet, and they've had a string of pretty good records. A lot of folks are trying their hand at power pop lately, and most sound stale and fake. Not here. This sounds like it came from the late '70s/early '80s. If this was released in 1975, it would have probably come out

on Bomp! or a label of similar repute. I put this on, first song, "Bicycle Rider" comes on. I think it's pretty good. Then "Where Did the Girls Go?" follows. I think it's even better. Then the next song comes on. That one is better, then the next, and... I almost want to laugh because this is so good it's near unbelievable. "New Century Life," which ends this record, has something interesting going on with it. It's as though it's two separate songs. The first version is more filled out with the guitar and the second version has a more stripped-down, spontaneous feel to it. No summer is complete without some Impulse International in it. —M.Avrq (Put, myspace.com/putarecords)

INCREDIBLE KIDDA BAND: Radio Caroline: 7"

"Two songs from 1977 U.K. powerpop band" says the sleeve. Allright, I can get on this train, popping at a regular clip, like its on tracks; smoothly going around corners, up hills, real smooth but you can feel tiny little jerky moments that let you know a human created it, not a machine. Love it. —Speedway Randy (Last Laugh, lastlaughrecords.us)

JAPANESE WOMEN: Order: Cassette
Seems that music is really starting to get ugly and abrasive these days. I like it! Japanese Women play dark, dirty, and abrasive sludgy music somewhere between No Trend and Drunks With Guns. The songs never break out of a mid-tempo pace and often have a feel akin to throwing cinder blocks against

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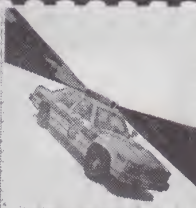
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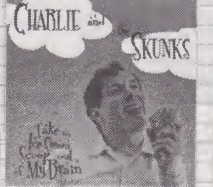
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a car window over and over, getting off on the crunching sound as well as the punishing weight of the blows. At times, they are pretty near catchy, such as on the closer, "Bessie Rice and Ellie May." Definitely one of the better tapes I've picked up lately. Vinyl soon? -M.Avg (Tapes Of A Neon God, japanesewmn@gmail.com)

JEFF THE BROTHERHOOD: *We Are the Champions: CD*

Ever sit and just watch a sport that you know nothing about—curling, bocce ball, that dancing gymnastic thing with streamers and balls—and just zone out on it? No real frame of reference, but you can admire the dedication and obviously expert skill. There are both fields of competitors and enough fans for it to be televised. By this record's name, I was expecting more Queen. More prance, Mensa, and opera. This had me thinking about a longhaired Weezer some moments, then some 2011 version of Led Zeppelin if it was two dudes the next. The songs change from channel to channel to channel, like they're mimics ciphering a distant transmission. Harmless in a channel-flipping way, but not something I'll paint my chest blue and cheer for when they're playing. -Todd (Infinity Cat, hello@infinitycat.com)

JEFFERY NOVAK: Self-titled: EP

Can't help but think of Syd Barret era Pink Floyd crossed with early Brian Eno. Add some glam flourishes, and you have a really good record. This seriously sounds like a lost gem from the early

'70s, especially due to the guitar sound on "Remember All the Expectations" and "The World of Peter Brown." The songs have an appealing dark side to them, be it the lyrical matter or the instrumentation, such as the keyboard and the sometimes spidery-sounding guitar. "Back at the Bottom" is the most upbeat of the four, while the rest have a little more of a maudlin, though sneering, attitude. Like this single quite a bit (limited to 500, so act fast). Definitely want to hear the solo albums. -M.Avg (Trouble In Mind, troubleinmindrecs.com)

JELLO BIAFRA AND THE GUANTANAMO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE: *Enhanced Methods of Questioning: CDEP*

One of the things I loved most about punk rock as a kid was the often obscure and sometimes downright weird shit I'd learn about that would never make the television news or the papers. As intended, it fostered in me a healthy distrust of pretty much anything handed to me as "truth" by the government and media and the corporations that own 'em, created a permanent habit of digging deeper for more information about something that's caught my interest, and the trivia geek in me has a whole host of tidbits with which to freak people out at garden parties and sundry society shindigs. Dead Kennedys, of course, were a fount of occult (as in "secret" or "hidden," so all you Jesus freaks can stop with the note-taking now) information, and some thirty years into our musician/fan relationship, Biafra can still plant that

little seed of obscure info that'll send me rushing to find out more. This time out, it comes via "The Cells That Will Not Die," and specifically the tale of Ms. Henrietta Lacks upon which the tune is based (no, I ain't gonna recount her story here. Go look her up yourself, ye lazy bastards). This, my friends, is what punk rock does at its best—it makes you think, to question, to use your sesos for something more than to act as an alcohol sponge or to deduce what Colorforms-type singer is gonna win the *America's Next Musical Equivalent of Popcorn* talent contest. Musically, the five original tunes here (plus a hidden cover of a song called "Metamorphosis Explosion" originally by a band called the Deviants) follow the same pattern as those on their inaugural CD, *The Audacity of Hype*, namely the band finds a groove and milks it for all its worth while Biafra does what he does best, in this case rail against Silicon Valley millionaires overrunning the Bay Area like a plague of locusts, point out the nasty byproducts of America's wars of empire, weigh in on the scourge of religion and the crimes of modern medicine, and take what appears to be a swipe at Bob Dole's appearances in pud-pepping pill ads. As with its predecessor, the songs, on occasion, go a wee bit longer than maybe they should, but for some reason they seem a bit stronger here in smaller doses, and, ultimately, are light years ahead of much of the pack calling itself "punk" these days. It's also a welcome relief that the songs here lean more towards a mutation of Killing Joke's "deceptively simple, sonically

rich, and all kinds of heavy" punk template than merely going through the motions of trying to out-Dead Kennedy the Dead Kennedys. Ultimately, nothing here is gonna change the minds of those that either love or hate Biafra, but those in the latter camp will find it a bit difficult to deny this is one of his more solid releases. This "having a real band for the first time in some twenty-five years" thing is suiting him much better than Lard ever did, and he's doing something his old DK bandmates have thus far failed to do, which is remain creative, topical and, ultimately, relevant. -Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

JESU: *Ascension: CD/LP*

Jesu's latest full-length, *Ascension*, is surprisingly only their third, despite the band's eight-year career. This is due in no small part to the plethora of EPs that the band has released. While he has other members that help when on tour and occasionally in the studio, Jesu is Justin Broadrick. The droney, shoegazer sound he creates also takes a slight nod to a doom, industrial influence, though it seems that the heavier take on Broadrick's sound has lessened with the release of *Ascension*. Yet, in that delicateness, Jesu has found a quality that suits it well. It's a sign of progression in the sound while still retaining some of the ethereal, ambient sound that declared the difference between Jesu and Broadrick's former project, Godflesh. While I wouldn't go so far as to say that *Ascension* is a "happy" album, it's certainly not as dark and morose as much of Jesu's previous

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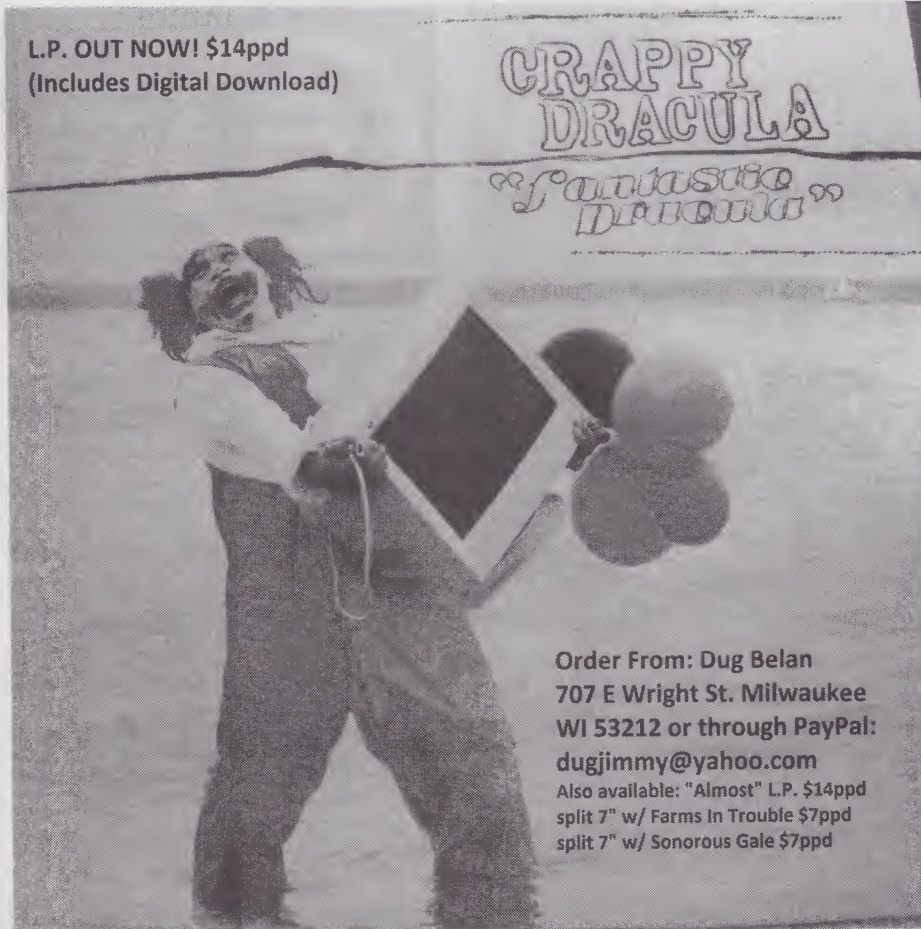
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releases. Might it be possible to listen to the ten songs on here and think more of a sunny, spring morning than an overcast winter afternoon? While I would have preferred a little more of a heavy edge to some of the music, it's always good to see an artist progressing, especially if—as is the case with *Ascension*—it is done in a competent and well-played manner. —Kurt Morris (Caldo Verde, caldoverderecords.com)

JOE LALLY:

Why Should I Get Used to It: CD

Third solo album from Joe Lally. I thought Fugazi were a great band and the thing that made them stand out for me was Joe Lally's style of playing (coupled with Brendan Canty's drums). Clean, yet driving, and grooves that very few can attain in a convincing way. This album sounds very much like a Fugazi record, which makes me wonder if he was their primary songwriter. Every song on here is sterling: catchy, driving, great vocals, clean execution, and memorable for days. I find that the title track and "Revealed in Fever" have become sort of personal anthems. "Let It Burn" switches gears, with a more experimental side. There's more of a minimal feel in how the percussion and bass work around one another. Easily one of my favorite albums this year. —M.Avrq (Dischord, dischord.com)

KICKING SPIT:

Psychorockbullshit: 12" EP

This is a hell of a record. As soon as you drop the needle, in swarms the

bass and drums with a thick coating of feedback and you know you're in for a ride. Imagine if Bob Mould jumped straight from *Land Speed Record* to Sugar. As a band, Kicking Spit boils down to hardcore shredders playing aggressive yet melodic noise rock, and they kill it! The hearty, breathy melodies take cues from the best bands of '90s college rock, while the guitar solos are constantly being kicked up a notch into total unrelenting eruption. Six songs on a 12" never seemed so logical. —Daryl (Tankcrimes)

KRANG: *Speed of Tent: 7"*

Echo-drenched stoner rock. "Big deal," you say. "What makes them so goddamned different than the tons of other bands doin' this shtick?" They've got a clarinet player. Bet your band can't boast the same. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mammoth Cave Recording Co., mammothcaverecording.com)

LEATHER: *Sterile: EP*

Nice! Leather crank out blistering hardcore that has a little bit of Bl'ast in the guitar sound. Four songs that stick in the mid-tempo range, allowing the band to add interesting elements, such as the change up in "Zek," and also how the vocals are delivered towards the end of the song. "Relapse" kind of bogs down, though it's not a horrible song. Maybe cut the duration of the song down a bit? "Novitiate" picks up the pace and recaptures the energy established by "No Motivation" and the aforementioned "Zek." The Jade Tree

website alludes to previous Leather material being tough to get a hold of. Hopefully that's going to change. This EP is pretty good, and I definitely want to hear more, past and future. —M.Avrq (Jade Tree, jadetree.com)

LENGUAS LARGAS: *Ese Culito: 12" EP*

This music feels like it should accompany extremely dramatic situations. Drug-induced paranoid freak-outs or desperately dehydrated quests for water would work perfectly. The haunting echoes of this band's many players reverberate through the speakers practically leaving light trails as your room and ears fill with the burning winds of Tucson, Arizona. With this record you get five strong gusts averaging at about two minutes a piece. From what I understand, this is also the first recording done as a full band. And full it most definitely is. —Daryl (Volar, volarrecords@gmail.com)

LIEUTENANT: *Self-titled: LP*

Instead of an X-ray, this record's the sound of a throat polyp forming a malignant mass. The constant strangulation quality to the vocals reminded me of the evil vulturey things, the Skeksis, in *The Dark Crystal*. Screaming. (Is it a coincidence that Dec., 1982 also saw the release of *Evilive?* Perhaps.) There's-a-"you"-mentioned-all-over-this-album-and-that-person's-a-fuckin'-asshole hardcore. For fans of Deep Sleep, Night Birds, Code 13. Effective. They haven't invented a new broom, but they sure know how to sweep. You never really know how dirty

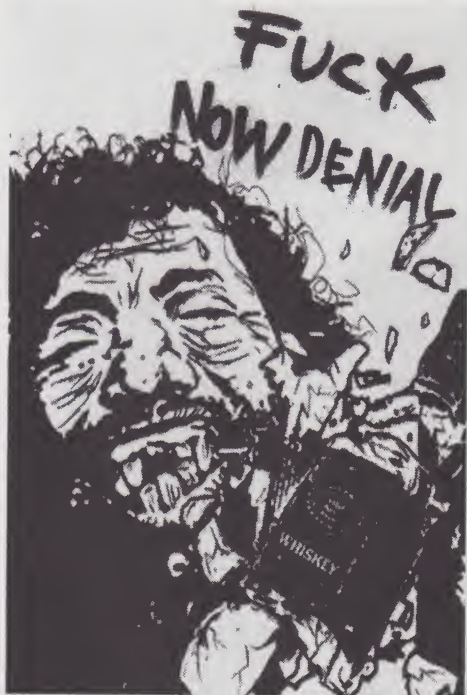
something is until you put your back into it. Lieutenant. —Todd (Art Of the Underground / Warm Bath / Peterwalkee; peterwalkeerecords@gmail.com)

LIKE WOLVES: *Self-titled: CD-R*

Sometimes when I listen to some of my favorite old bands, my noggin likes to go off on these flights of fancy of how their sound could've progressed rather than how they actually did progress. Not to say that a band progressed incorrectly, though there have been a few that have lost their sheen once they learned that ever-elusive fourth chord, but more a matter of how they might've ended up sounding had they taken a different road. Where Like Wolves have gone here could've easily been terra in which Black Flag or Die Kreuzen might've gleefully stomped had they turned left when they hit that fork in the road—loud, big sound with intricate flourishes and hints of psychedelia smuggled in under all the battering guitars, odd time signatures, and howling vocals. Like the aforementioned progenitors of pummeling punk, these guys have the sense, and skill, to work well beyond simple racket-mongering and instead serve up stuff that would make snooty musician-types pause and pay attention after dismissing it out of hand as "noise." —Jimmy Alvarado (Hanging Hex, hanginghex.blogspot.com)

LOVE BOAT: *Love Is Gone: LP*

Love Boat is a power pop trio from Italy that have kept the mood mostly light, as is the nature of the music. The music is



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really upbeat and they keep it simple and to the point. The opener, "My Cousin's Place," has a slight '60s girl-pop touch. What I like most about this record is how they begin side two with "Modern Ties." This song totally disrupts the sunny mood and brings things down a bit. The tempo is slower and they mix a country and western influence into the sound. A great song and a great change of pace. Definitely the strongest of the bunch. A record for when you want summer in the winter. —M.Avrq (Alien Snatch!, aliensnatch.com)

LOVEY DOVIES: Self-titled: CD

Fuzzed-out, noisy rock in the realm of bands like Dinosaur Jr, Archers Of Loaf, and Pavement: walls of distortion, quieter, near-acoustic breaks, tuneful, and driving. In a just world, songs like "Comatose" would be on radios everywhere. Despite the crashing drums and guitars, there's a forlorn feeling (a mood that repeats in songs like "I Like People") pervading the whole song. It really pulls you in and changes the mood of the room. Really, this is the type of music that has a few layers going on, making for interesting repeat listens. There's a particular feeling here that's enticing, which had me going back to this many times, and allowing myself to get carried away by focusing on the bass lines, or the layers of guitar, or the delivery of the lyrics. The songs are arranged with a particular flow that carries you the whole way through. Well worth the effort to get this one. —M.Avrq (Teen

Fuzz Swamp Cult Of Swirly Hypnotic Rat Eyes, loveydoxies@gmail.com)

MAGNIFICENT, THE: 1981: 7"

The title track is a very catchy punk anthem not pining for one of punk's many glorified eras, but rather taking on the sense of disillusion kids born in that time period feel at living in the mess of a world their boomer parents made. The flip's title, "Six Beers (Slight Return)," threatened a disposable paean to boozing it up, and instead delivered a solid piece with acoustic guitar and a catchy hook. A very welcome surprise from what sounds like a really goddamned good band. —Jimmy Alvarado (Drunken Sailor, drunkensailorrecords.bigcartel.com)

MALA IN SE: Self-titled: CD

These kids plant their flag in a lotta terra simultaneously—metal, noise rock, hardcore, ambient soundscapes, and just straight-up noise—and end up releasing one doozy of a listen. There's precious little here that could be described as "melody" and the going's pretty much a full-bore assault on one's hearing with nary a letup in sight. That said, underneath all the skronk and slam-banging can be heard a lot of texturing and layering of sound and the utilization of a wide variety of instrumentation, sampling and such by folks who clearly know their way around what they're plunking on. The results show a bit more sophistication than the average pack of assholes with little more than a yen to damage some eardrums. Far from easy listening, those who can

manage to hold on tight and weather the ride will find the effort worthwhile. —Jimmy Alvarado (Phratry)

MAMA ROSIN AND HIPBONE SLIM AND THE KNEETREMBLERS: Louisiana Sun: CD

More rootsy, bluesy stuff from the great Swiss label, Voodoo Rhythm. Given the title of the record, I suppose it is not a surprise that there is a healthy dose of zydeco and Tex-Mex in the sound here as well. Pretty strong songs and vocals. Folks who appreciate roots sounds would find a whole lot to like here. Kneetremblers also feature Bruce Brand of the Milkshakes/Headcoats, so any fan of various Billy Childish projects might wanna check *Louisiana Sun* out. —Mike Frame (Voodoo Rhythm)

MANIKIN: Keep Dancing Charlie: 7"

Part of me wants to tell the me who claimed in a review of one of their earlier releases that they sounded like early south bay punk, "Dude, what the fuck were you smoking?" Thing is, I can still kinda see where that earlier me was coming from, 'cause I definitely hear some punk heft in the two tunes here, along with a bit of Gang Of Four noodling and an almost tribal undertow to the drums. While dashes of darker post punk are slathered all over the chassis, there's a bit more going on under the hood. This is definitely worth your time. —Jimmy Alvarado (Super Secret)

MANIPULATION: Self-titled: 7" EP

Hardcore, fast, angry-as-fuck, big in sound, and unrelenting. Side one is a prolonged bludgeon with three tunes and nary a break between 'em, then they finish you off with two more on side two. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sorry State)

MICKY: Rock 'n' Roll Dreamer: CD

A little bit o' lo-fi, a little bit o' glam rock, a smidge o' theatricality, and a lotta chutzpah make for some interesting listening here. They love their rock with hooks and ain't ashamed to aim for the fences. Gotta respect that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

MIGHTY GRASSHOPPERS, THE:

Self-titled: CD

First things first: this is a new band featuring Tony Fate of the BellRays. Second thing: this record has been in constant rotation on my stereo since it showed up. Chock full of killer melodic songs that are equal parts Real Kids and Reigning Sound. One of the vocalists really brings to mind John Felice and several songs here sound like they could have been on the solo record from the Real Kids leader. This could not be higher praise coming from me. The Mighty Grasshoppers are perhaps the rarest of all beasts in current times. The band is simply four guys in their 40s/50s writing great songs with no image to speak of. There is not even a website address on the disc, just a PO Box. It is incredibly refreshing to get an album where the songs are more important than the package and the seventeen

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places you can buy merch or network with the band and their fans. There are more great, classic-sounding songs here than most bands could come up with in two decades. The songs on this album are timeless and immediate; hummable after only one listen but offering more depth with each spin. The standout track here is "Caravan" with its soulful vocal but every single song on the album is a hit. Highest possible recommendation on this amazing out of left field record. -Mike Frame (Vital Gesture)

MISCHIEF BREW:

The Stone Operation: CD

With all the northern renaissance artwork in the layout, I was expecting something significantly more evil sounding, but alas, I was bombarded by very competent carnival-punk (more Carnivale than carnival, really) that's reminiscent of early Against Me! if that band was comprised of creepy, Steinbeckian, travelling degenerates. It's actually quite interesting and unique, to be honest. Not something I would personally listen to very often, but I know that there's a lot of interest in this kind of bizarre cross-pollination lately, so hopefully Mischief Brew can get in on some of that buzz. -Dave Williams (Fistolo)

MUSHUGANAS, THE:

Lows in the Mid 90's: CD

A massive discography CD from this Chicago band that existed from 1993-2003. It looks like they have done a few reunion shows since then. But for those of you who are unfamiliar with the band

like me, this is a great place to start. With thirty-two songs here, it's hard to know where to sink your teeth in first. But if punk with driving rhythms, raspy vocals, and in-your-face drums is your idea of a good time, then this is probably a worthy addition to your collection. How can you go wrong with a band that has a song called "Strawberry Shortcake"? -Sean Koeppen (Beercan)

NAPALM RAID: *Trail of the World: 7" EP*

All the fury of this Canadian crust three-piece's live shows is compressed onto their first 7" of new material (The first 7" was a re-release of the demo). Not only is this raw and raging crust in all its gritty glory, but this is also some of the most tight and technical-sounding punk you'll find in any subgenre. Three originals, plus a cover of "Misery," by Bastard make this a solid EP that should be added to your collection immediately. -Paul J. Comeau (Rust And Machine)

NEEDLES/PINS: *Self-titled: 7" single*

Garage punk with a nice dirty sound. The B-side, "Kalifornia Komer" is the better of the two. "Drop It" is okay. A little bit of power pop oozing into the sound. The mood is light, carefree. But that song, "Kalifornia Komer" has a lot of punch and aggression. The rhythm is jumpy and manic and the delivery is more to the point. More songs like this! -M.Avr (Scum Buzz)

NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS: *1-sided 12" EP*

The whole L.A./S.F., northern/southern California punk rivalry is a fuckin'

farce man, designed by lazy minds and a back-pocket excuse to go beating on someone you don't know. Point in case: L.A. transplant Jenny Angelillo, formerly of the Orphans, taking up the Penelope Houston/Avengers role while one-year-ex-OC dude George Rager plugs in through guitar riffs reminiscent of Circle Jerks "World Up My Ass." I'm not sayin' it's a SF's band's lovefest, but borders are for xenophobic fucktards and I'm looking for world peace... one neighborhood at a time. Looking for nothinkin', jerk-you-from-your-seat punk rock? There'll always be worm-wiggle-on-the-floor room for 'em in my record collection... -Todd (Modern Action)

NIGHT BIRDS: *Midnight Movies: 7"*

Earlier in the year, I went on a mission to listen to some of the bands I hadn't heard that would be playing at Chaos In Tejas this year. I found Night Birds' self titled 7" (on Dirtnap) and was promptly blown away! I loved the trashy surf punk sound that sounded like it was coming straight out of the Hostage Records scene. Throw in some East Bay Ray style twang and I was salivating for more. This platter is serving up my wish and then some. It turns out that not only do Night Birds share similar influences with me, but also my love of B-flicks! The four tracks here are the Birds' ode to those movies and the sleazy grindhouses that play them. By the time you read this, I'll have seen them twice in Tejas and will be awaiting the impending LP. Definitely my favorite new (to me) band of the year so far! -Ty Stranglehold (No Way)

NINE FINGERED THUG:

Bitter Ballads: 7"

Sludgy, tribal noise rock courtesy of a band hailing from Raleigh, North Carolina. This seems to be a bit of a concept recording, in that the lyrics to both songs appear to be first-person narratives relating to the relationship of German surrealist artists Hans Bellmer and Unica Zürn, the former best known for his "Die Puppe" series of pubescent dolls, and the latter for her automatic drawings and anagram poetry. If you're remotely interested in early Swans and the like, you'll no doubt find much here you'll dig. -Jimmy Alvarado (Hollow Bunny)

NO PROBLEM: *Paranoid Times: 7" EP*

I hear a definite mid-'80s hardcore influence here, a period when bands that had been around the block were starting to fiddle with a bit more sophistication amongst the crash-bam. The bulk of the stuff stays in mid-tempo territory and, at times, evokes later-period Minor Threat and Second Wind, but in a way that doesn't so much sound like them as it does thinking along the same lines, if that makes sense. The redacted lyric sheet visually illustrates the release's title and, on the whole, these guys put in some fine work here. -Jimmy Alvarado (Handsome Dan)

NORMALS, THE:

Vacation to Nowhere: LP

So awesome! Despite coming from New Orleans, these guys sound like they came from Huntington Beach. If you like the

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Crowd, Simpletones, and the rest of the *Beach Blvd.* comp, then you will love The Normals. My first exposure to this band was a mix tape a friend made for me that had the song "Almost Ready" from their one and only single. Equally blown away and crestfallen because I didn't think I'd ever hear more from them. Lo and behold, Last Laugh Records has unearthed this LP, which was recorded in 1979, and for some reason, never released until now. This deserves "classic" status. Seriously, if this had come out when it was intended to, people all over would be having conversations about how awesome this album is, and going song by song, extolling the greatness of everything about this record. The music is well played, the choruses are catchier than hell, the vocals are great. It's poppy, but still has a tough attitude. All I can think when I listen to this—over and over, and over and over—is, "What a great album!" Twelve songs and not a stinker amongst them. —M.Avg (Last Laugh, lastlaughrecords.us)

NOW DENIAL: *Fuck Now Denial: 12" EP*

Now Denial has never been a band to follow a musical blueprint, and *Fuck Now Denial*, is among the band's best releases to date, showcasing their distinctive blend of hardcore, punk, and metal. The intricate guitar work, complex song structures, and willingness to be in-your-face aggressive as well as slower and more melodic, as in the track "Way of the Buffalo," makes this 12" EP a real gem. —Paul J. Comeau (Tor Johnson)

OBNOX: *I'm Bleeding Now: LP*

The solo debut of This Moment In Black History drummer Lamont Thomas is a noisy, cacophonous affair. Hyper-distorted, reverby guitar, contrasted with an overall lo-fi sound, creates a muddy feel that requires a few listens to truly appreciate. The initial impact of this wall of muddy sound obscures the technical, rhythmic drumming and the elaborate song structures present in the record, as well as burying the vocals deep in the mix. Getting past that, there is a ton of melody and a high percentage of catchy riffs, making for an overall enjoyable record. "Totaled," and "Daughter" are the two most accessible tracks, demanding repeated listens, but "Gin and Coke Water," might be the best track on the record once the listener is used to the vibe of the album. This is not an easily accessible record, but it gets more and more compelling with each play. Dedicated listeners will grow to love this, but those put off by their initial impressions will be hard pressed to give this record the attention it justly deserves. —Paul J. Comeau (Smog Veil)

OFF!: *"Compared to What" b/w "Rotten Apple": 7"*

Keith Morris and OFF! continue to grab people by the throat and force them to take notice. Hot on the heels of the amazing *First Four EP* set comes this two-song blast of punk anger. I've heard it said that OFF! is too derivative of Black Flag, but I don't buy it. Keith was one of the architects of that band and sound. Now he happens to have a

band that seems to match his vision and aggression. If it comes off reminding me of early Black Flag, that just can't be a bad thing. I prefer anything that OFF! has put out to anything post-*Damaged*, anyway. OFF! is on! —Ty Stranglehold (Southern Lord)

OLD MAN LADY LUCK: *Self-titled: LP*

Old Man Lady Luck busts out heavy instrumental rock that defies easy genre classification. Are they post-hardcore? Post-rock? Drone? They are perhaps a little of each of these things, but they are also so much more. With lots of guitar wankery, frequent changes in tone and tempo, and complex riffs that rise and fall in intensity, each song on this record feels like a movement of a symphony. Combined, the songs on this album reveal a fine tapestry of sound. I continue to find things that intrigue me about this album, even after repeated listens. Regardless of your taste, there will be something about this album that will pique your interest. —Paul J. Comeau (Forge)

OLD MAN LADY LUCK: *Self-titled: LP*

MOM, SUMMER CAMP IS WEIRD, BUT I FOUND THE ONE GUY WHO THINKS "OBLITERATION" BY BLACK FLAG IS A GOOD SONG!!! Actually, for something i hate, this is not terribly bad. BEST SONG: There are songs? BEST SONG TITLE: There are song titles? FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Record has the phrases "Meat on meat, eh?" and "Get him a glass of meat, eh?" inscribed on the runoff grooves. —Rev. Nørð (Forge)

ONE DAY: *Self-titled: 7"*

This is one of those cases where low fidelity doesn't help the songs much (the recording's pretty tinny), but the care and aesthetic is otherwise entirely apparent: clear vinyl, hand-stamped labels, absolutely beautiful silk-screened covers. Seems a testament to a band making do with what they have, sonically and visually, and, for the most part, coming up aces. The lyrics are rife with a dragged-down melancholy, very I'm-immobilized-by-desperation-and-gloom type stuff. Given that, the whole thing still feels nicely strung together with basement sweat, half racks of sale beer, duct-tape guitar straps, and the potentially redemptive power of an amp turned to ten; One Day reminds me of a bleak-as-fuck Crimpshrine, and while the sound quality is less than ideal, the presentation's thought out and the heart's visible right there on the sleeve. —Keith Rosson (Abandon Hope)

OOPS, THE: *Taste of Zimbabwe: CD*

Total f'n ripper! They sound like an early '80s hardcore punk (emphasis on the punk) band. Short, reckless blasts that have the subtlety of a bull in a china shop. The cover of "Small Man, Big Mouth" is decent, and a bold choice to even commit to recording (considering the original is untouchable). However, their originals are where their strengths lie—"Wooden Cunt," "Shave and Quit," "On the Lift," "Death to Brunetta," and the shredder "Christian Gay." Italy seems to be cranking out some great bands lately. —M.Avg (Slovenly, slovenly.com)

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OPTIMUS PRIME: Self-titled: CD

Emo/metal stuff from Russia. Yup, you read that correctly. —Jimmy Alvarado (OSK)

ORGANS: Get it Right 7" EP + Flexi

Five tracks total of raucous '60s punk ravers. From the title track, with its requisite harmonica solo, to the brooding "Girl I'm Thinking Of," to the flexi's sole foot-stomper, "Makin' Love," these guys manage to nail it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Killer Diller)

PEOPLE'S TEMPLE, THE: Sons of Stone: CD

Psych-rock, fuzzed out and buried in reverb. They clearly plant their paws in their chosen terra, but there's enough diversity here to keep 'em from getting boring and repetitious. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

PHANTOM OF THE BLACK HILLS: Born to Gun: CD

Psychotic, punk-saturated hillbilly stuff with titles like "Cross Yourself (Before You Cross Me)", and enough banjos and distorted geetars to keep both camps tickled pink. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ratchet Blade)

PHIBES: Demo: Cassette

A present-day East Coast band that sounds like early '80s SoCal hardcore punk. Tuneful, driving, and wound up. The pace is somewhere in the middle and they never go for the full-on trash side. Instead, they let the power simmer and brew. Think of early TSOL,

Adolescents, and the type. "Silenced Tongues" is the definite standout on here. It has a hard hitting mid-tempo before shifting into a brain-rattling-fast attack. Features a member from Bloodtype. Hopefully, these guys will put out more soon. Good stuff. —M.Avr (Phibes, phibes.bandcamp.com)

PLURALS, THE: The Plurals Today, The Plurals Tomorrow: A Futuropective: CD

Certain artists pull you in. Hearing them makes you say, "I could do that. I should do that!" The Ramones. The Minutemen. (Shit, The Minutemen said it from the damned stage! Watt still ends concerts by tellin' folks to "start their own band, paint their own picture, etc..."). The Plurals belong in this company. Seeing them live is revelatory. They're one of the few groups today whose influences aren't merely contemporary, yet they don't fall into some retro trap either (the days of them being some '90s knock-off are, like, over, man). They simply play rock music, styles and conventions and trends be damned. *Futuropective* is the record I've been waiting for them to make, and it's been a long time coming. It's their *Zen Arcade*, their *Double Nickels*. The record where they truly put to disc what we've always seen them do live. The record that, if there were any justice in the world (or if people still liked rock and roll anyways) some schmuck would be writing a book about twenty years from now. When you have a band that is this goddamned rockin', it's just undeniable. These guys and gal play like their life depended on it. It does. They reach new heights of

musical interplay (there's a phrase usually reserved for Rush reviews, eh?) without sacrificing one ounce of face-blowing-off power or catchiness (and this is easily the catchiest The Plurals have ever been). I'd list song titles or whatever people expect reviewers to do, but everything on this record is so all-fired great I'd have to talk about every damned one of them. (Nobody's paying me by the word here!) I will say that "Happy Songs" is probably the best Plurals song ever written and that the moment where Nick says "Guitar!" like he's going to introduce some rockin' guitar solo, but Tommy just comes in with some palm muting and ends the song is a wonderful bit of probably unintentional humor. (The kind that makes me write run-on sentences, apparently.) *Futuropective* is the past and the future all in one place, with a voice that is undeniably their own. No hype, no bandwagon-jumping, no bullshit. Album of the year, hands down. —Ryan Horky (Good Time Gang, gtgrecords.net)

PRIVATE DANCER: Alive In High Five: LP

Drunken, flailing bar rock from Minneapolis. Similar to the Mannequin Men or hometown heroes The Replacements. These guys know how to take rock'n'roll tropes and pump them through their own keg with no foam. Highlights include "Diane," the best rock'n'roll song I've heard this year; "Weekend," which is either about having to work all weekend while your friends party or about your job being to rock out and party on the weekend; and

the heartfelt glam of "All Souls Eaters Day." I just realized it's nearly six PM, so I should experience no guilt as I open a beer and play this again. —CT Terry (Learning Curve)

PYGMY LUSH: Old Friends: CD

Some of the coldest winters I've spent have been in the South, where the temperature rarely drops below freezing. Southern punk houses are drafty. Heat is never included in the rent, so it stays off, and everyone wears long johns and knit hats to bed. The Taylor brothers from Pygmy Lush's old band Pg. 99 used to practice in a shed on their mom's property in Northern Virginia. There's a photo of what I assume to be that shed on the back cover of this album, and it looks like the type of decaying structure that would barely shelter some punks in January. And *Old Friends* perfectly captures that feeling, of it being too cold on the couch for you to take off your sticky socks, of warming your hands over the pot of macaroni as it boils, of wishing you could meet someone to keep you warm at night. In the past, I've come down on Pygmy Lush for sounding too much like their influences, namely Black Heart Procession and Three Mile Pilot. Now, they sound like their own band. They play creepy, atmospheric, acoustic rock that occasionally swells with its chaotic hardcore past. Good shit. Night music. —CT Terry (Lovitt)

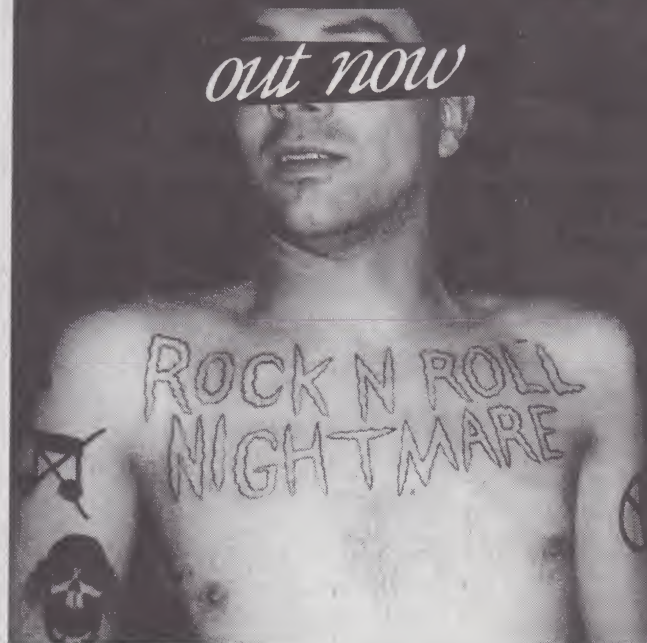
QUANTIS/ COMA REGALIA: Split: 7"

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holding a skull, I was preparing myself to be inundated with, I don't know, some weird-ass patriotic Canadian rockabilly or something. I was so far off the mark—Quantis is from Malaysia and they clearly, clearly adore the screamo. They give us three songs so utterly convincing that Level Plane would've shit their drawers over were we still in 2002. While the lyrics may suffer a bit from translation, the genre was never particularly known for its linear lyrics anyway. This shit rules. Indiana's Coma Regalia swings the Orchid hammer hard and dresses it up in some fancy dual-vocal tomfoolery and thunderous musicianship ala This Machine Kills. It's not gonna be everyone's thing, but for those who dig this stuff, this record's gonna get some spins. Totally top-notch work here by both bands. Numbered to 500 and definitely worth seeking out. —Keith Rosson (Middle Man, middlemanrecordsblog.blogspot.com)

RAW NERVE: *Tall Tales: 12"*

This record collects all the band's out of print singles and demos in a somehow more cult limited edition of two hundred copies. It was released as a part of Record Store Day at Reckless in Chicago. Listening to the band's discography offers a little bit different perspective on what they've managed to accomplish over the past couple of years. The main thing that sets these guys apart from a lot of the "mysterious" bands they get lumped in with is that you can actually tell their songs apart from one another. They've actually done something very

few hardcore bands have been able to achieve, which is put out several releases focused on a very narrow aesthetic that have their own nuances. Basically, what I am saying is that everything Raw Nerve does sounds like Raw Nerve. Even the first demo tape (which I had never heard before this collection) has a very mature, developed aesthetic to it that's totally unnatural for a first recording. On a side note, I feel like I should mention that I've reviewed probably ninety percent of the records Youth Attack have put out over the past year and a half and never said anything about the label or the way the business is run because that's all any other reviewers talk about, which I consider tacky for several reasons. However, I need to point out that the backlash from "sincere supporters" against the label reached its height in reference to this record, which is an unfair attitude. This record was released in small numbers but was meant as an incentive for people to support a local brick and mortar record store; something people lose sight of when they only purchase their records via eBay for three times what they cost elsewhere. I called the store and got this record for \$14. It's nobody's fault but your own that you paid \$100 for it on eBay. —Ian Wise (Youth Attack)

REATARDS, THE: *Teenage Hate: LP*

The appropriately un-re-mastered sounds of this band's first album and long out of print early demos have been collected together. Few of the songs on the album get past the two-minute-

mark. The first song on the album, "I'm So Gone," doesn't even venture past the one-riff-mark. "I'm So Gone" is a flailing caterwaul of anxiety. The song repeats a declaration of homelessness probably intended to be interpreted literally, but the metaphor of disassociation with society is palpable and kicks off the album. More progressive melody lines enter on the second track. "Stayce" shows that the band was destined to extract slight bubblegum influences from a vast haze of fuzz. Fear, Buddy Holly, and Dead Boys covers pepper the album as influences clearly work on the sleeves of a great rock band. "Out of My Head, Into My Bed" serves as the classic on the record with a combination of simple melody breaks, a complete and hummable chorus, and a naive sincerity about relationships that cannot be denied. Included in the reissue of the album are recordings that made up two self-released cassettes that the band produced before the release of *Teenage Hate*. These demos have become infamous among tape collectors. The tapes are furious documents of three-chord mayhem. With this re-release, a chapter of snotty teenage angst is well documented. —Billups Allen (Goner)

REBEL SPELL, THE:

It's a Beautiful Future: CD

This record is fuggin' awesome—punk rock comfort food. The Rebel Spell have a tight, fast, melodic sound with some burly vocals that are not so much anthemic as they make you want to sing along at the top of your lungs as

you drive down the highway and take smug pleasure in how much society can suck at times but you forge ahead anyway like the trooper that you think you are. I'm forty years old now, and this record made me want to dance in the pit again. Start to finish, it's an invigorating shot of adrenalin, but the songs have a level of maturity—both musically and lyrically—behind the snarling irony so frequently present. As a result, this record not only makes me willing to continue to go against the grain, but it reminds me of why I do. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Rebel Time)

RED MASS: *Self-titled: 7"*

Gotta respect Hozac, 'cause no matter your ultimate decision whether or not you dig a record, you can pretty much rest assured it's gonna make for some interesting listening, and this is no exception. The colorful cover hints at either bizarre hardcore and/or noise rock, but the music itself is a bit more sophisticated mélange of arty, occasionally dark punk, rock and, in the case of "Freak Show," maybe even a hint of '50s rock. Can't say it's the best thing I've heard all year, but an interesting listen it definitely is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

RESIST CONTROL: *Dissipation: EP*

After a killer demo from awhile back and a couple tracks on the recent *Buffalo Brutality* comp, Resist Control unleash a raging EP. Fast and intense, the songs blaze by in a matter of seconds. The urgency is up front and in your face. The

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drummer sounds like a machine! So fast and throttling. Just listen to "Ideas Not Politics": teetering on the edge of chaos! The only time they really slow down is toward the end of "Kleptocracy." The chorus on "Falling Apart" slows down a touch and is catchy, but they keep it in the red for the most part. Damn good record! —M.Avrq (Feral Kid / Shock To The System)

RHYMODEE:

The Get Lucky Sessions: Cassette

The singer from This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb playing catchy racket that shines through the terrible recording quality. Covers Motörhead's "I'm So Bad (Baby I Don't Care)" brilliantly. I'm going to convert this into a less archaic format and listen to it while waiting for Rhymodee to release a full length CD, hopefully. —Lauren Trout (Self-released)

RICOCHE: (title in Russian): CD

A Russian band mixing a decent cocktail of indie rock and punky pop, whose efforts are hampered by a singer that too often sounds like he's straining to hit his notes on-key. —Jimmy Alvarado (OSK)

ROSES NEVER FADE: *Fade to Black*: LP

This is dark, yet serene. There's a bleakness here that is attractive—and oddly comforting and reassuring. The guitar sounds cold at times and there is a lot of space in the sound. Everything is so clean as well. "So Far Removed," with the acoustic guitar, is unbelievable! So good... Lyrics are just above a whisper,

though not campy or overwrought with emotion. This is music for those who have willingly disconnected from the world and the societal games that lead nowhere but to submission and compromise of self. At times this is epic without being loud. The title track is a perfect example. The tempo is up, the acoustic guitar dominates, and it has a sense of a new start. If you like Death In June, Boyd Rice, and Lurker Of Chalice, then you'll like this. Me? I more than like this. —M.Avrq (A389, a389records.com)

RUBBER CUSHIONS: *Crazy*: 7" single

Huzzah! Huzzah! What's up with hiding the scorcher on the flip? "I Won't Be Your Lover" should have been the A-side. Not that "Crazy" is a sloucher, as it's definitely a strong song. But that previously-mentioned song on the B-side—whoa! Fast paced and rocking like a muhfgga. They slow down in the middle, put in some harmonica, catch their breath, then put the flame back on high. Now, back to the song "Crazy." Reminds me of the Standells and Music Machine: hard-hitting tempos, catchier than hell, and delivered with attitude. Damn good record! —M.Avrq (Girth, girthrecords.com)

SAMIAM: *Orphan Works*: CD

In case you don't know, Samiam is, for ease of identification, an emo band with punk and alternative leanings from the Bay Area—think a less punk and more alternative (and accessible) Jawbreaker with a more consistent catalog.

Anyway, I was rather suspicious of this when I first heard about it. I swear by the band's *Billy* and *Soar* LPs. However, I am generally not thrilled with live recordings, and these songs were recorded during the band's *Clumsy* and *You Are Freaking Me Out* periods, which aren't bad but not my favorites. Upon having listened to this compilation, I must say that my apprehension was a bit unfounded. My latter worry, that this would have been solely a retrospective of the *Clumsy* and *Freaking* eras, was assuaged by the presence of selections from *Billy* and *Soar* (and even one from the first LP!). The rest of my trepidation gave way when I found that the live tracks were mostly done live in the studio and on radio stations, and the rest of the live ones didn't sound like shit. These recordings, at times, offer a slightly altered approach, which were interesting to hear. That said, I still prefer the emotive force of the *Billy* and *Soar* versions of the songs that appear here. As for the rest of the tracks, there were a couple of oddities to me. First, though Samiam is great, they have no business covering The Pixies or Iggy And The Stooges—these covers should have been destroyed like your old high school poems. Second, "She Found You," a single from *Freaking*, didn't make the cut in any form. Overall, this isn't bad yet far from great. I can see it serving the purpose of giving an overview of Samiam's early and mid period output to a new listener, but I think that it is better suited for those infatuated with the band. To those who would like to check

out Samiam for the first time, I would say go with *Billy* and *Soar* (or track down *New Red Years* if you don't want to take a two-album plunge). —Vincent (No Idea, noidearecords.com)

SARKYNEET:

Mita On Olla Levoton: 7" single

What?! Only two songs?! One of them being a cover of "Secret Agent Man," here titled "Vaaksa Vaaraa Vain." This record is so good!! I want to hear more than a couple songs. It's like giving you a small taste of your favorite food then taking it away. Arrrgggghhh... Sarkyneet play tuneful and driving punk with surf influences in the guitar, and some '60s pop in the medley. The title track requires repeated listens. I hear there is an LP coming from these folks soon. Should be worth picking up, if this single is any indication. I predict this band will become a big deal in the next couple years. Such a good record... —M.Avrq (Combat Rock Industry, fireinsidemusic.com)

SASSY!!!: *Diggin' Deep*: CD

Grrrrl powa! This garage pop duo out of San Francisco employs fuzzy guitar chords and touch me, tease me vocals. It's obvious these girls dug deep into their repertoire to produce this latest full length. Coloring over the lines into rockabilly and surf, "So Bad It's Good" uses hand claps and doo wop harmonization while the girls have fun with time signature in "Wild Summer," slowing down and speeding up the track. Unfortunately, this album loses steam



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about half way through, pulling heavily from ex-boyfriends and new ones, but this could fit in nicely with those who dig The Kills' bluesy guitar riffs, the moxy of The Donnas, and the polished surf pop of Blondie. —Kristen K (Good Trouble, myspace.com/sassytheband)

SCREECHING WEASEL: First World Manifesto: CD

If you're hip to these mammals, you know the deal. As with previous releases, the order of the day is Ramones-inspired pop punk heavy on the hooks and a wee bit more sophistication than the zillions of Xerox clones that have followed in their wake. It's also no surprise that there's been some personnel overlap between these guys and fellow heavyweights in the genre, The Queers, as they both make the most of the same patch of dirt, with Screeching Weasel maybe resorting to use of the word "fuck" a bit less. Can't say I've ever been much of a fan, and this doesn't change that much, but there are literally thousands of bands doing the same thing with less satisfying results. —Jimmy Alvarado (Fat Wreck Chords)

SCUL HAZZARDS: Landlord: CD

This Australian band's album is eleven songs of post-punk and math rock clocking in at thirty-nine minutes. It's reminiscent of Chicago bands like Shellac or Bear Claw as well as Blenderhead, a Seattle band from back in the mid-'90s. It's got a loose sound that is still coherent enough to pack the necessary punch. I like a band that records at a level appropriate to

their sound. There's no need to record somewhat sludgy, dirty, aggro rock in a million dollar studio, nor should it sound like it was done on a four-track. The recording sounds just right for the band's sound. Scul Hazzards is aggressive and has some catch to their sound, too. The guitars remind me of an aggressive, skinny guy: he may be thin but he's got a lot of energy and intensity that can transform into impressive muscle. The bass is rumbling, the drums striking, and the vocals reminiscent of Steve Albini's work not just with Shellac but also Rapeman and Big Black. I'm not sure this would be a cup of tea for any music fan, but for those who occasionally find themselves inclined to listening to math rock or post-punk, this should be right up your alley. —Kurt Morris (Tenzenmen)

SHARP ENDS: Self-titled: 7" EP

The "art" and dark brood are still very evident in the four tunes here, but the tracks here have a bit more of, oh, a groove imbedded into 'em. According to a piece of paper included on the release, this is a reissue of their first self-released EP, which I guess would mean the stuff here is closer to the base from which they expanded on subsequent releases. It also says they've called it quits, which is a fuggin' drag, 'cause they were one of few who are really trying to push a bit at the boundaries and coming up with interesting results. Gonna miss 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mammoth Cave Recording Co., mammothcaverecording.com)

SHARP OBJECTS: Zero Ambition: 7" SHARP OBJECTS: Another Victim: 7" SHARP OBJECTS: Five Song EP: CDEP

I know someone will inevitably come forth to decry this statement, but I'd say on the west coast there've been two labels that are pretty much the go-to places for '70s punk/power pop/kitchen sink influenced stuff. In the south there's Hostage (been a while since I've seen something from 'em, so they may or may not exist at this point), who unleashed Smogtown, The Stitches, Broken Bottles, Bonecrusher, Smut Peddlers, and tons of others, while the north has been ruled by the mighty Dirtnap, who've released crucial material by The Briefs, The Gloryholes, The Spits, the Epoxies, and a veritable who's who of the subgenre. With recent releases by The Bodies, Modern Action (the band), The Orphans, Smogtown, and others, it appears that Modern Action (the label) is now making a play to fill the void left by Noma Beach's absence and rule the territory both literally and figuratively between the other two, and these releases are a few more warning salvos over the bow of anyone trying to move in. Like so many of their label mates, the songs on both singles feature an amalgamation of northern quirky punk pop sensibilities and southern thud-punk muscle. Yeah, the style might be starting to get a bit cookie-cutter, if you wanna be nitpicky about it, but I'll be goddamned if these guys aren't milking it for all it's worth and ending up with some choice hits here, and there ain't a clunker in the bunch. For those

who prefer their music on a more recent dying format, The Five Song EP CD has the four songs from the two singles, plus a Satan's Rats cover. —Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)


SHEGLANK'D SHOULDERS:

Skate Assassin: 7" Flexi

Calgary's now-legendary skate rockers return with their final release. A little bit of full disclosure is necessary here. These guys are friends of mine and our bands have toured together. That said, I would also never stretch the truth in reviewing some skate rock, so here it is. Heaviness abounds. Izzo and the boys deliver another couple songs with the power of mainlining an energy drink. Great to get the blood pumping before raiding a construction site for lumber to build a ramp. My complaint: A flexi-disc? Really? It sounds great and all, but it just feels... weird. A release with such an amazing cover painting deserves a proper vinyl release. —Ty Stranglehold (Handsome Dan)

SHINOBU / ALBERT SQUARE, THE: Split: 7"

Shinobu has always confused me. I've seen them play multiple times, I own many of their records, and they still manage to defy any kind of rock-solid description. It'd be a disservice to simply call them "indie rock" and be done with it—they're too smart, too literate, and at times, way too catchy. And to call them a pop band wouldn't work either—their stuff can be downright challenging



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sometimes, bordering on dissonant as hell. The two songs here—one a dense, brooding number and one a stumbling, charmingly awkward ode to getting fucked up—aren't their best work, but they're still good and manage to add yet another facet to the indefinable quality of the band. The Albert Square, on the other hand, almost sounds like a power pop band, similar to Role Models or a streamlined, bare-bones Tranzmitors if they were a three piece. Their two songs are great, brimming with confidence and, like Shinobu, showcasing a vocabulary that rivals Greg Graffin. Having never heard of 'em before, they came as a hell of a pleasant surprise. Damn nice split, you guys. —Keith Rosson (Phat N Phunky)

SISSY SPACEK:

Vanishing Point: EP flexi

I like noise/experimental music. Always have, always will. The reasons vary. Mainly, because it goes far beyond all the hardcore bands saying shit like "destroy all music." Well, noise bands—or individuals—certainly destroy all preconceptions of music. I always want to hear something new, something that widens my view of the world and broadens my horizons. Noise and experimental music is the perfect vehicle for getting there. And, often times, I like noise because it can slow down my mind when thoughts are racing faster than I can comprehend. There's nothing like a few minutes of blasting white noise and ungodly distortion to get me grounded. Like

today, feeling overwhelmed, slightly burnt out, and just not "in the mood," I put on this Sissy Spacek flexi. Short loud blasts of drums, noise, and someone in the background with a raspy scream. Played it over and over for a while. I feel better now. Thanks. —M.Avrq (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

SLAM DUNK: Self-titled: Cassette

Slam Dunk sort of sounds like what I would imagine Eyehategod would sound like if they wrote minute and a half long songs, but a little faster and a little less riffy. At times I hear a bit of later Caustic Christ (when they got a little weirder and a little slower) influence. Comes with a download card. Cool shit! —Chris Mason (Let's Pretend, letspretendrecords.com)

SLOBS: Look Busy, Do Nothing: 7"

Four burly punk tracks with a tough garage edge. I'm sure it's not what they're going for, but they honestly remind me of French oi from the '90s, but with that total Deranged/Grave Mistake Records vibe (fans of 86 Mentality will go nuts for this). The vocals are so slurred that they're a little hard to follow, which is a shame because the lyrics are above par for a band of this variety. But I guess when you're making a racket it doesn't really matter if you can pick out every syllable. —Ian Wise (Cowabunga)

SLUTEVER: Pretend to Be Nice: 7" EP

This band is about twelve-trillion times better than name and packing would imply. It's like half girlie

indie-pop, half "Psychocandy" Scot-pop fuzz, half Cramps-like drum pounding, and a third strawberry-oat porridge. Anyone who complains that the math on that adds up to something like 167 percent should just bust out their wallet and count their fucking blessings. SLUTEVER delivers *VALUE!!! Value!! value!* BEST SONG: "No Offense" BEST SONG TITLE: "So Prone" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts and Design" —Rev. Nørð (Bantic Media, banticmedia.com)

SMALL BROWN BIKE:

Fell & Found: CD/LP

I knew that The Casket Lottery had a connection to Small Brown Bike (they did a split together) but having never listened to SBB before this release, I didn't realize how much the two bands sound alike. Thankfully, for someone such as myself, that's quite all right, as I also really enjoy The Casket Lottery. Without knowing their back catalog or history (except that they're from Michigan) I can only judge the band on this album. This is their first full-length album since they broke up in 2004. Recorded and produced by J. Robbins, *Fell & Found's* eleven songs clock in at around forty minutes. Thanks to Robbins' contribution, the recording sounds great. The band has three vocalists, all of which contribute fairly and complement one another. While not quite as broad of a contrast, there are similarities between the vocalists from Dillinger Four. Of

the three, one is cleaner sounding while another is a little more scratchy and deeper. It serves as a nice distinction. Musically, the sound is very reminiscent of the indie rock stylings of... ah, fuck it. These guys sound just like The Casket Lottery and I love it. This album has the quality you've come to expect from No Idea's releases, the fine production work of J. Robbins, and the sound of a band with nothing to lose and no care as to what anyone else thinks. Songs like "On Repeat" had me after the first listen: great lyrics, driving music, and an emotional sound that isn't stagnant or sappy. And the whole album is like that. It's as if the band took my favorite indie rock/post-punk stylings from my college years (late '90s and early '00s) and made an album meant to take me back there. And that's okay by me. Thanks, Small Brown Bike! —Kurt Morris (No Idea)

SMOGTOWN: Incest & Pestilence: CD

After more than a decade of constantly playing their assorted releases, I think I'm well versed enough with their oeuvre to say with some authority that, by my reckoning, there are two Smogtowns: Compilation Smogtown and Album Smogtown. Album Smogtown (which, for the purposes of this discussion, includes Singles and EP Smogtown 'cause otherwise we're just chopping things down into tiny little bits and lose the whole point of discussion), is responsible for some of the best punk/hardcore/whatever to come out of OC over the past decade, doozies of releases like *Beach City Butchers*, *Fuhrers of the*



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debut EP re-released (I still have My OG Poshboy copy!) Great Guys, Great
band!" - Rikk Agnew, from the Adolescents/Christian Death

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New Wave, Domesticviolenceland, and the legendary *Smog on 45 EP*. Utterly faboo stuff for the listener, but one helluva line of nine-hundred-pound gorillas for Compilation Smogtown to get over, and let's be honest, if we were talking about damn near any other band, the B-list songs these cats hand off for their compilations would be grade-A contributions. When stacked up against "Bad Vibrations" or "I'm a Jerk," however, a tune like "I Wanna Fuck My Chick in the Skate Ditch" just doesn't have a hope in hell. Both Smogtowns make their presences known on the album under discussion and they make for an album that, given the monsters it has to live up against, is uneven by comparison. A number of factors no doubt come into play—this is their first full-length in a good long while, lineup changes resulting in only half the original lineup being involved all the way through, and the fact that it was recorded by their own admission "over a long period of time"—that likely mucked up the process of coming up with enough tunes to satisfy both Smogtowns, so a melding of the two became a necessity here. What all this blathering boils down to is this: While this is by no means a shitty album, the boys have, to their detriment, set the bar pretty goddamned high for themselves. Some truly kickass moments are in abundance here, like "Subdivision End Product," "If We All Have Guns We Can Melt All the Love," and the "stray way the fuck off the beaten path" brilliance of "Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing," to name just a few. Peppered here and there, however,

are songs that are clearly B-listers, and as a result, this falls just shy of their own standard, making it "good" instead of "mind bogglingly great." Could I recommend this release? C'mon, dude, this is Smogtown we're talking about. My adoration remains unchallenged and I have yet to run into a release of theirs that ain't working miles ahead of their peers, this one included. I just wish they'd left the comp tracks where they belonged and had been content with unleashing another doozy of an LP (albeit it a shorter one) on the unsuspecting public, 'cause there's one definitely in evidence here. —Jimmy Alvarado, Smog City Waver #91 (Modern Action)

SMOGTOWN: *Incest & Pestilence*: LP

This is a hard place for any band to be. 2000's *Fuhrers of the New Wave* stands as one of the best punk records in the past ten or so years. It stands—as an album—as one of the definitive monoliths and testaments to the best of California punk rock. No gaps. No hesitations. It's a conceptual whole, a united front, and an achievement. If all goes well for a band, with age comes depth. Smogtown's at their best in their exploration behind the cinderblock walls, the gated communities, the sale and the harmful fiction of Orange County "paradise," the cul-de-sac of suburbia's "culture" that's sold as a type of "freedom." In reality, it's where teenage animals are made and caged and where they often attack. Songs like "Subdivision Endproduct" are perfect examples of Smogtown continuing

to X-ray and debunk these sacredly-held real estate and high capitalism illusions. In *Incest and Pestilence*, Smogtown branches out in several directions. In "Waste of Breath," it's sunny, pop-pleasure tackling organized religion. "Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing" nods to Saccharine Trust-style horn skronking. In "Let's String up the New Marketeers," Smogtown addresses the world outside of their geography: "You can wear their shoes and steal their blues / let them clean up the waste." But not all of the risks paid off for me. What follows isn't a "You should never change; Bad Religion yourselves forever." They aren't even flat-out disappointments, but elements that are preventing me from unequivocal praise of the record as a whole and the ridiculously high and unfair bar I've set for the band. 1.) The song "Fuck My Chick in a Skate Ditch." You can do better. 2.) The way-too-long sound clip about guns. (Sorta interesting the first listen; annoying every other time.) 3.) The last song on side two ends sounding almost like practice outtakes, then goes into an acoustic jam. The album ends with a whimper, not a cage breaking. Leave the acoustic jams for the compilation tracks. Uneven, yet still very worth picking up. —Todd (Modern Action)

SORE SUBJECTS: *Self-titled*: 7" EP

Female-fronted pinhead punk that's greatest strength is its cerebral-ality, ultimately manifesting itself to the lazy reviewer as a cross between Head

and the Welders. Songs about drinking Schlitz® and getting your hair cut like Dee Dee Ramone, served up in a style that is not critically handicapped by undue musicianship. Messed me up so gloriously I went out and got my hair cut like a can of Schlitz® and drank a 24 oz. can of Dee Dee Ramone. Word. BEST SONG: "Tall Boys" BEST SONG TITLE: "Gimme A Dee Dee" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I refuse to deem any sub-24-ounce can of Schlitz® a "Tall Boy," as, in the 70's, the original Schlitz® "Tall Boy" cans were, indeed, 24 ounces. —Rev. Nørb (Sore Subjects)

STEAKKNIVES, *THE: Devil Inside*: LP

Hell f'n yes! A much-needed shot of adrenaline right here! The Steakknives, from Italy, are back with their debut LP that is nothing short of killer. Mix up early L.A. punk like the Bags with early hardcore and you get these guys. The songs have urgency, are delivered with convincing attitude, and the playing is as raw as it is razor sharp. They never really jump into super speedy assaults ("Big Money" is about as fast as they get and it still packs a wallop!), which allows them to retain the power and the punch of the music with mid tempos, and time changes to bring everything down to a knuckle-dragging lurch that reminds me of early '80s OC hardcore. All the songs are great. Not one clunker in the mix. The title track has a nice dose of urgency that shifts between fast to mid tempo without missing a beat. The vocal delivery kind of reminds me of Frank Discussion.

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Whoa! Decent cover of Bad Brains' "Big Takeover". However, I would prefer to hear another original song from these guys. Great record. Hunt this fucker down. I'm on the search for their debut EP from a couple years back. —M.Avr (White Zoo, whitezoorecords.com)

STEEL TIGERS OF DEATH!:

Precious Moments: CD

Two main vocalists: one Fred Schneider-ish and one Larry Damore-ish. So, somewhere between an all-male B-52's who cut their teeth on the Descendents and a tongue-in-cheek Pegboy. Depending on your knowledge of the bands mentioned, that's a pretty fragile ecosystem. Lean too much one way, it's too much of a dismissible joke. Go the other, it's like the song will ask you to pick up a shovel and start digging and toiling along (instead of enjoying) the record. Thankfully, STOD! are trapeze artists of sorts (and look great in gold lamé short shorts). *Precious Moments* contains some of my favorite songs by them. They've also addressed a previous complaint: this recording sounds much more alive than previous efforts (and looks great draped in strings of portable, all-weather lights). Good stuff. —Todd (Mustardpack)

SUNDIALS: *Never Settle: LP*

Wow. Twelve songs of the college town blues played with a punk heart and the ramshackle catchiness of '90s indie. I'm having a hard time knowing where to start, since so many things are striking me about this record. Sundials are based

in Richmond, Virginia, a dangerous little city with a thriving arts scene based around a rapacious college. Richmond is one of those places where you can pay your rent by working three days a week in a restaurant and take your band on a sweet weekend tour in any direction except east. Sundials sing about the drawbacks of this charmed life: "I traded learning for a coffee shop, and I'm losing money in the long run. Can't advance too far once the curve is done." All three members write songs, and all have a knack for capturing a feeling without being verbose, dumbing it down, or not seeing beyond the beers in front of them. Other topics include gentrification, lost love, southern ennui, Native American plight, and —why the hell not—*The Great Gatsby*. Their sound mixes punk and indie in a way that has paid off for early '90s bands like Archers Of Loaf, the first couple albums by Alkaline Trio, Against Me!'s more intimate material, and the gruff underdog pop punk favored by Tip-Top Todd Taylor et Le Razorcaque Readershippe. I've been gone from Richmond for the better part of a decade, but some things never change, like the confederate monuments and the fact that the city still spawns awesome bands. Like I said, the college town blues. —CT Terry (Toxic Pop)

SWEET TOOTH: *Japanese Void: 7"*

Holy thrash from hell. Here we have six tracks of totally raging hardcore that all break the speed barrier without resorting to blast beats or gimmicky sub-genre nonsense. The songs are

great in a totally timeless way, as these tracks have the analog feel of '80s production, with the speed and intensity of the late '90s. If this thing didn't have the year on it and I had to guess when it was recorded, I wouldn't even know where to start. Lyrically, this record is great in a classic, snotty, sarcastic way. "Therapy Nightmare" includes the line, "Who bonds with these assholes?" Who needs poetry when you can say it out loud? Highly recommended listening. —Ian Wise (Cowabunga)

SWINGIN' UTTERS:

Here, Under Protest: CD

It's been a long time since I listened to the Swiggin' Utters. But it's a nice change from what I have been listening to lately. They are one of those bands that I need multiple listens before I start to appreciate the songs. This is the case again. I have had this on repeat for most of the day. It's growing on me. First track, "Brand New Lung," reminded me of modern day Bad Religion. In fact, the whole album gives me a Bad Religion, Social Distortion-meets-Squeeze feeling. Another thing I noticed is that they seem to be a lot mellower. They're focusing more on melodies with a cowpunk under current, focusing on the mid-tempo. But they do come through with a charging attack with the song "(You've Got To) Give It All to the Man." The song shakes things up with punk rock fury. As with all Fat releases, the production is top notch. —Donofthedeath (Fat)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET:

Another Way: CD

I picked this out of the piles because Brett from OBS raves about these guys, so I figured what the hell, why not? As the first track made its way through to the end, I remembered two things 1) Brett loves pop punk a bit too much; 2) He has the taste of a brain damaged yak with most of its senses dulled after years of being battered with walrus intestines dipped in a caustic concoction of strawberry Kool-Aid and Funyuns. The disc? A collection of mostly faceless, uneventful Ramonesy pop punk culled from a twelve-inch and two seven-inches released early in the last decade. —Jimmy Alvarado (Red Scare)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET:

Mutilate Me: 7"

Straightforward pop punk that, despite being a bit overproduced for my tastes, is easily the best I've heard from this genre since The Copyrights. Side A features a catchy song filled with Screeching Weasel-esque one string guitar solos and "woah oh oh"s. Side B features harder hitting song called "Punk House of Horror" that could easily be about one of the numerous punk houses I've spent time in, as well as a Bad Religion cover that starts out strong enough, but takes a turn for the weird that made me double take to make sure the record wasn't skipping. —Chris Mason (Fat, fatwreck.com)

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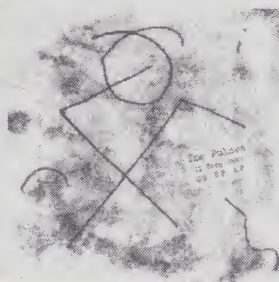
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TO HELL AND BACK:

Will We Be Torn Apart: LP

It seems that metal-styled hardcore is creating some waves these days. Fortunately, not all of it sucks as is expected when you mention both of those genres in the same breath. To Hell And Back, after being inactive for some years, return with a full length of the kind of abrasive yet skillful musicianship that is on par with current greats such as Doomriders or Burning Love. I'd have to say that the great vocals put THAB a step ahead of the rest, however. There's some actual singing as opposed to just screaming/growling/shouting, but don't worry, there's some of that on here too. Just imagine if Corrosion Of Conformity's venture into metal (not crossover, mind you) had gone right. They still would have not sounded this good. —Juan Espinosa (Peterwalkie)

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO

CANDYLAND: Knows Your Sins: LP

"Southern California. Weed. FYP. Go!" are the *Cliff Notes* to URTC. The cloak and dagger of URTC is they're undeniably a punk band (always a positive in my book), but they're one of the sunniest, relaxed, fun, and laid back punk bands you're bound to come across. Both. It's no, "We grew up punk, but we secretly loved reggae and have outgrown punk" jive. URTC's not involved in back-turning. It's more of a sunbathing and a quieter intensity. And there's a still a lot of smog in the sky. But what can you do? Smoke up. *Knows Your Sins* isn't a phoned-in lay-up or an easy

sequel to *Bird Roughs*. If you're familiar with their debut, this second full-length batch of fudge isn't a brand new recipe. But they're expert chefs in the musical kitchen of the mind—keeping things fresh, fun, sounding just-cut and warm from the oven. There are also a couple of straight-up instrumentals (or two word songs "Animals! RUN!!!"). Cock-of-the-walk Davie Allen and the Arrows and Link Wray-inspired theme songs so convincing that I swear the songs come packaged with a poncho, a surfable wave, and sombrero for the listener. So if you're looking for some danceable smile-along-to-it-isms, San Pedro's URTC's the ticket. —Todd (Recess)

UNFUN / STYMIE: Split: 7"

Fucked-up sing-a-longs for the late '90s Gainesville house show in your mind. Each band supplies two songs of pissed-off, let down, turmoil-fueled tunes. Unfun sound like the vocals are being recorded through a payphone, possibly from a holding cell in County. Stymie are a tad cleaner, with hotter licks, and try their hardest to disguise the anxiety with a little more of a pop element. This split is definitely worth tracking down. —Daryl (ADD)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

A Tale of Rotten Orange: 2 x CD

Took a thorough look at the credits provided, 'cause this has that Rick Bain/Hostage Records sound all over it, but no, it looks like this is this label's inaugural release, and a doozy it is. Two discs of grade-A punk from south of the (L.A.

County) border from both legendary acts and new jacks alike—Druglords Of The Avenues, Disguster, Narcoleptic Youth, The Piss Pops, The Dogs, Crazy Squeeze, The Boners, I-9, The Crowd, Social Task, Broken Bottles, The Hitchhikers, Bonecrusher, Smogtown, The Junk, Fork Tailed Devils, Killing California, The Loyals, The Stitches, Foul Response, No More Saints, Neon Maniacs, Raw Helmet, and The Uncivil all contribute at least one song to the ensuing shenanigans. Omitted from the proceedings are the endlessly boring pop punk and ska acts that too often these days are propped up and handed the OC punk flag to run right into the ground, and instead the listener is treated by what is arguably the true OC underground sound, with styles ranging from the rock/punk to the trashy to the hardcore spectrums and back. Good stuff all the way 'round and destined for a slot on upcoming year end lists of this year's better comps. —Jimmy Alvarado (Orange Fight, orangefight.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Buffalo Brutality: EP

I can't remember the last time I've listened to a comp that was half way decent. Let me think.... Hmmm... Ummm.... Let me think... err... Nope, can't remember. It has been a while. Welp, this comp is actually pretty good, and not one with a couple good songs and the rest shit. This one is good the whole way through. Focused on Buffalo, NY bands, this delivers on the hardcore, grind, and thrash fronts. Resist Control crank out two songs of hardcore with some Infest influence, though not a direct copy. Ordinary Men And Women

blow my cloudy mind with some down-tuned, bass-heavy lurk. What I wish MITB would have sounded like. Avulsion, who should get some sort of reward for still being around (I remember them well from the '90s), have one song of their patented grind that's tighter than hell and hits with brute force. Morax have a bit of crust side in their sound. I like the rawness of the guitar here. Inerds, Scheisse Krieg, and Ancients Of Earth keep the needle in the red. A comp worth picking up... —M.Avr (Warm Bath)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: East Infection: 7"

Mess Folk: I mistakenly put this record on at 45 RPM and thought this was some seriously deranged fast and noisy rock with a screechy female lead singer. Cool! About thirty seconds in I realized my error, started the record over, and realized this some seriously deranged slow and noisy rock with a male lead singer. Still cool! I don't even know how to place this: like if The Cramps scrapped their rockabilly influences in favor of Scratch Acid? Meat Curtains: More deranged rock and roll. The guitar player is playing the same repetitive four-chord riff over and over again while the drummer beats the shit out of his drums and the lead singer screams incoherently over it all. Awesome! Strawman: Straight forward rock and roll. Not all that bad, but not particularly memorable. The Shats: Garage rock that could have easily been written by someone from Denton, TX (aka Mind Spiders, Bad Sports, etc). Pretty damn good! Oh, I just realized both bands on the A side are from Nova

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Scotia and both bands on the B side are from New Brunswick. Nova Scotia by a mile! Three cheers for the underdogs! —Chris Mason (Foul & Fair)

VIGILANTES, LOS: Self-titled: CD

Some more Puerto Rican garage rock for yer listenin' pleasure here. Unlike Davila 666, they rely a little less on the "trash" and instead infuse the tunes with a bit more punk heft to give it some muscle, though the tunes themselves share some similar off-kilter qualities as those of their more celebrated Boriqua brethren. Summer's here, crank it up and throw down a mean chancala to this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

WIFEY: Salt Sugar Fat: CD

Stuff that I looked into online about these guys claims that they play alt-country, but I don't see it. In my mind, this is a really good rock'n'roll record. It sounds like a twangier, good-humored version of the sound of Tim-era Replacements, but without the bitterness and muted sorrow. At five songs, this was far too short for me. I felt cheated by the brevity so I'm looking forward to hearing more from these guys. Well done, lads! —The Lord Kveldulfr (Tenzenmen, myspace.com/wifeycares, wifeycares@yahoo.com.au)

WOMEN IN PRISON: Self-titled: EP

Awesome! I still haven't recovered from their flawless demo, and while these three songs ("Strange Waves," "Births of Rot," and "Circles & Circles") are on the demo, it's nice to have it on vinyl. Blown-out punk that straddles some dark territory

between hardcore and garage. The music is blown out and the vocals sound like they were recorded in a cellar. May sound off-putting to the less adventurous, but you never know what you're in for unless you take a chance. Fans of No Trend, Flipper, and more recent groups like Fresh Meat, you need to get this. —M.Avrq (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

X: More Fun in the Real World: LP

Some of X's catalogue is being reissued on vinyl by a label in Los Angeles called Porterhouse. *More Fun in the Real World* is X's fourth album. At this stage, the band's songwriting leans away from the more straightforward punk predecessors *Los Angeles* and *Wild Gift*. The album contains some great songwriting but gets into the territory of being more for those with an esoteric interest in the band. "I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts" finds the band's gritty lyrical sensibility being delivered with guitar picking and snare shuffling. It's a song I would not want to live without. The album also contains a cover of Jerry Lee Lewis's "Breathless." All said, it's pretty essential; a weaker X album is still better than most good albums. A funny thing to me about this release is that it has a sticker on it that confirms that the band approved of the mixes. I can't imagine them getting together to belabor the mix of *More Fun in the Real World*, but as long as they're happy with it... —Billups Allen (Porterhouse)

YOUR PEST BAND: Ya-Ya-Ya: LP

Japan's answer to the Modern Machines, exercising a wee more restraint?

Eschewing being a musical kaleidoscope, Your Pest Band opts for the hard-rolling, train-on-tracks playing that builds a shaking, vibrating momentum throughout the album. It's rough-voiced punk pop that features ultra-proficient and confident playing, keeping the wanking in check most of the time. (Dear world, Led Zeppelin still sucks and so do any Zep covers. Sorry, Japan.) I can hear a whole host of American rockers hidden inside their cabinets and underneath the drum carpet—Mellencamp, Petty, and Springsteen, especially—but they seem to want to update and move forward instead wear their influences on their sleeves and sleep through cover sets in worn-out bars, so it's endearing and definitely worth checking out. Good stuff. —Todd (HS!BF, hsbrecords.com / Snuffy Smiles)

YOUTH AVOIDERS / ZOMBIES ARE PISSED!: Split: 7"

I loved the Youth Avoiders demo and have been looking forward to more material from the band. This 7" delivered everything I could have wanted. While preserving the raw intensity of the demo, the three songs on this split present a more refined and melodic sound, with even more delicious hooks, sweet riffs, and an all-around crisper mix. The tracks "Night Fever" and "Ready for the Action" are my favorites, and easily among the best of Youth Avoiders' catalogue. The Zombies Are Pissed! side of this split presents four songs that mix fast and thrashy hardcore with slow and melodic parts, including rocking breakdowns and sing-

a-longs. The band's sound is reminiscent of melodic hardcore acts of the mid-late '90s, but they distinguish themselves with excellent songwriting—making them more than just another clone. Better production quality here than on their demo makes these songs shine. I really dig both of these bands and consider this record a must-have. —Paul J. Comeau (Destructure, destructure.org)

ZERO ZERO: Demo: CD-R

Driving back to the glorious West Side from the barbaric lands where the Razorcake bunker is located, I put the Zero Zero disc into my disc player in my car, windows down, and cranked the fucker up loud. Sat in the parking lot a few extra minutes before picking up my daughter from preschool and enjoyed the sonic assault these folks dish out. Listened to it a few times over and over before getting out of my car. It's that good. Fast, thrashy, and raw hardcore punk is what they serve up. The songs race at a breakneck gait, the bass is rapid fire, and the guitar has a great sound that reminds me of the Plugz for some reason. Vocalist sounds a lot like Tony Erba. They slow down on "Chinese Shoe" for a brief moment and it's pretty good. There are six scorchers on here. Don't be lazy and lose out on this. I hope they get something new out soon. I want to hear more. More! This is so damn good... —M.Avrq (Zero Zero, zerozeromail@gmail.com)

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"The first
fifteen pages
were wildly
uncomfortable
to read."

—Lauren Trout
SHUT UP AND
LOVE THE RAIN

ALL I WANT IS EVERYTHING # 1, \$3, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", 52 pgs.

As a point of reference it might be worth pointing out that the author of this zine, Caitlin, also wrote *I Was a Teenage Mormon*. It was not long after I learned that she had made another zine that I found myself picking up a copy of *All I Want Is Everything* from Marching Stars Distro. It's been six years since she wrote a zine and I hope that on the strength of this issue it develops into a more regular thing. While her previous zine flowed in a continuous narrative, this one feels a lot more like a collection of diary entries, letters, and columns which explore subjects such as nostalgia, personal goals, meeting heroes, and inspirations. I am well into this zine and can't get enough of it. —Steve Larder (Caitlin Constantine, 2073 Skimmer Ct. W. #223, Clearwater, FL 33762, saltonmyskin@gmail.com)

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR FANZINE #4, 8 1/2" x 11", copied

A punk fanzine that covers Detroit and the Grand Rapids punk scene. There are some interviews with local bands, a couple of record and show reviews, and a show calendar. Then there are some local scene politics, like the calling out of a shady venue. I liked the part of the Aggro Or Die! interview where the interviewee tells of his introduction to punk. It was a particularly sweet (as in "aw, that's sweet" not the more versatile "sweet, dude") anecdote. If you live in the Michigan area, this zine should be your jam. —Craven Rock (Criminal Behavior Fanzine/Pirated, PO Box 1196, Royal Oak, MI 48068, david@detroitpunk.org)

DIY & FOLK PUNK, \$3 ppd.,

8 1/2" x 11", copied, 40 pgs.
This is an amazing zine that pulled me back from the brink of being burnt out at the beginning of this summer. You just don't come across zines that are this well written, thought-out, and enthusiastic all the time. The introduction explains the history of the folk-punk movement and how it ties into punk rock DIY ethics. The author, Ben, does a great job of getting to the heart of

this movement by citing examples and using quotes from different artists who are involved. Instead of gushing about how great folk-punk and DIY are, he explains what's going on and lets the reader get into it on their own. The rest of the zine is full of interviews with musicians who (whether they like it or not) are generally associated with the DIY/folk-punk genre: Jessie Williams, Paul Baribeau, Pat the Bunny, Chicken Little, Chris Clavin, and quite a few more. Again, Ben keeps his opinion out of it by letting the artists answer the questions without any prompting or leading, which is very respectable when you are writing a zine that involves facts and history. There are one or two people who end up making themselves sound like jackasses in their interviews, but I am really glad that Ben didn't edit their answers to try to make them sound cooler. This *DIY & Folk Punk* zine comes with the highest recommendation that I can give, and it is definitely one of my new favorites. —Lauren Trout (Ben Algeroy, 7614 Janak Dr., Houston, TX 77055, benalgeroy@hotmail.com)

DORIS #28,

\$2.60 U.S., \$3 Can./Mex., \$3.80 Overseas, 7" x 5 1/2", printed, 32 pgs.

A lot of *Doris* reviews start with, "If you've read *Doris* before, you probably know how you feel about this zine..." This is true, but following that train of thought throughout the issues can also overlook the gradual evolution of the writing and content. The format and feel of this issue are the same: short personal stories that draw on the specifics of life to interpret them in a greater scope. The platforms for this are changing but still gaining new perspectives as they settle down. Much of this issue is rooted in the land Cindy lives on, where now she farms with her sister. The already strong writing is still being pushed towards greater economy and potency of language. As *Doris* ages, it reminds me more and more of Grace Paley's short stories (especially a few in this issue), both in style/confidence and how politics are getting more subtly infused with the narrative.

I guess this makes sense—I think Paley started writing her formidable volume of fiction when she was middle-aged, which Cindy is reaching. Working within a subculture where much of the productivity and validation is reserved for the young, it's refreshing and encouraging to have Cindy still hitting new strides. —Dave Brainwreck (Cindy Crabb, PO Box 29, Athens OH 45701, dorisidorisidoris.com)

DO SOMETHING ZINE #2, \$3,

8" x 5 1/2", photocopied, 52 pgs.

A DIY how-to manual. The concept is a noble one: sharing specialized skills that some readers may not have knowledge about, though in 2011 anyone who is purchasing a zine either has access to a computer or access to the plethora of DIY books that have been published. If you want to know how to make a zine, you should just pick up *Stolen Sharpie Revolution* from Alex Wrekk. While *Stolen Sharpie* is extensive in detailing page numeration and includes notes for further reading, *Do Something Zine* merely tells a prospective zine writer to think about what they want to write, then write and print it. In "How to Book a Show," the prospective booker is told to find a band, get the arrangements in writing (though it's unclear what these arrangements are. What's a legit guarantee? What's a legit split for the door?), and lastly, buy the band beer and let them stay at your place. The most detailed part of this section is the ratio of cases of beer to cases of bottled water you should provide for the band (1:1, by the way). My point is not that no one should try because people have done it all before, it's that there's no reason to start from scratch when it comes to education. This isn't creativity we're talking about, it's information. In fact, the only way this project would be redeemable is if it was creative with an individual perspective. —Katie Dunne (indyvegans.com)

DUDES MAGAZINE #17, \$5,

8 1/2" x 11", printed, 92 pgs.

What we have here is a really thick zine with a nice glossy and thick stock cover. With a nice-sized group of contributors,

Dudes covers a variety of topics—from an interview with In Defence to a criticism of Glenn Beck. A lot of ground is covered. I enjoyed the article, "Bitch Names in Sports," because it featured one of my favorite former Detroit Tigers, Rusty Kuntz. I'm not much of a "dude," sort of guy, but I found lots of interesting things to read that made up for the "dudeness," aspect of the zine. *Dudes* also features interviews with the Dopamines, Holy Shit!, and Tony Weinberger (organizer of The Fest) and came with a CD sampler that I'm looking forward to listening to. —Steve Hart (Dudes Mag, 3872-A, Connecticut St., St. Louis, MO, 63116)

DUDES MAGAZINE #17, \$5,

8 1/2" x 11", printed, 92 pgs.

Do you like drinking, "babes," and toilet humor? How about "Fest"-type bands, eating pizza, and talking about pooping? If so, *Dudes Magazine* is probably right up your alley. This zine is full of frat boy humor for dudes who like pop punk. The humor is not nearly as clever as the editor(s) of this magazine think it is, so it ultimately left me with a very "ehhh" taste in my mouth. Included are interviews with The Dopamines, Fest organizer Tony Weinberger, Holy Shit!, In Defence, and others, some dude columns about various travels, as well as a little bit of sports and political writing. As a bonus, this comes with a CD which has thirty-one tracks of dude-approved tunes from the likes of Tiltwheel, Too Many Daves, High Tension Wires, The Dopamines, New Creases, and many others. I'd like to see the dudes be funnier, more offensive, and really take this a notch further. And I'd also recommend to get rid of the political stuff, as it's hard to take a political column seriously when a few pages later I'm looking at the "Cable of the Month" and "Teabag of the Month" photo spreads. —Mark Twistworthy (Dudes Mag, 3872-A, Connecticut St., St. Louis, MO, 63116)

EROTIC DISMEMBERMENT #7,

\$2, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 22 pgs.

This is definitely worth the two bucks. The dude who puts this out loves the cut

and paste method, which is great. There are multiple newspaper clippings facing all four sides of the page, requiring you to hold the zine in four different positions. A number of photos and other images make up the background as well. My two favorite news clippings are about a man in London who was caught spraying his own urine and feces in supermarkets across the pond, and a man in Cape Girardeau, MO who was caught cooking meth at the Sonic restaurant where he was a shift manager. An interview with a topless cleaning lady is featured in these pages as well, along with a couple show reviews, a lot of book reviews, a few pages worth of record reviews, and even VHS reviews! Other items worth reading include a piece honoring Siouxsie And The

tour tips that are often funny and each contain a back story that most bands can relate to. I especially enjoyed an article on a musical play list. A song will come on and the writer tries to write what that song means within the time frame of the song. I thought that this was a good writing exercise, and one I'll try in the future. —Steve Hart (Fluke, PO Box 24957, Tempe, AZ 85285)

IF DESTROYED STILL TRUE #6, £3.00, 8"x 5 1/2", 28 pgs.

Nine writes that she is traveling indefinitely, the reasons for which are beyond the scope of this zine. She's been to ten or so countries since 2011 began and this issue of her zine describes her time in Iraqi-Kurdistan. It tells of hitch-hiking experiences good and bad,

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL #335, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, 128 pgs.

In keeping with the spirit of the season (this is this monthly zine's April issue, which means Jesus and April Fools Day), this installment has been subtitled the "Christian punk special," and features on its cover a pretty funny, multi-leveled piss-take on the iconic image that graced the front of the Teen Idles' sole EP. Also of note here is Al Quint's column, which keeps the April festivities going with a tale about Springa from SS Decontrol's latest cinematic endeavor. The rest is the usual hit and miss hodgepodge of columns, interviews (yakfests ensue with Crazy Spirit, Timmy's Organism, Devour, Sunshine SS, Siege, Attention Span, Mauser, and Icon Gallery),

applaud Nizang for his enthusiasm and dedication in publishing fourteen issues of this zine, but the book reviews are excerpts from Wikipedia. —Katie Dunne (Nizang, 49, Jln Rahim Kajai, Trm Tun Dr Ismail, 60000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, nizangmosh@gmail.com)

PROOF I EXIST #13, \$8.00,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 34 pgs.

Here's a personal sort of zine that has a bunch of stories of adventures and interesting people the author has met. The layout is cut and paste and there are a variety of miscellaneous things glued into the zine, including a small bag of chest hair. I probably could have done without that. The article that stuck out the most is entitled, "Dude. Relax." It goes into detail of the absurdity of

"A man in Cape Girardeau, MO was caught cooking meth at the Sonic restaurant where he was a shift manager."

—Nighthawk

EROTIC DISMEMBERMENT #7

Banshees and a list of sixteen reasons why the cell phone is ruining society (kind of ironic, considering that as of June 7, I am on day six of my phone being dead). For anyone who still prefers print over digital, I would recommend this zine. —Nighthawk (Sephrotic, PO Box 190702, St. Louis, MO 63119)

FILLING THE VOID, \$5.40 US, \$5.80 Can./Mex., \$7.25 Overseas, 7" x 8 1/2", printed, 56 pgs.

The subtitle for *Filling the Void* is, "Interviews about Quitting Drinking and Using," and that's exactly what this is: eight interviews with people about their struggle with alcohol and drugs. I found this to be pretty interesting—in recovery, people tend to find themselves doing certain things at various points in the process. I remembered doing a lot of the same type of things and having trouble with emotional reactions to events when I was newly sober. I think this could be a very good resource for anyone who is interested in—and wants to pursue—a life of recovery. —Steve Hart (Cindy Crabb, PO Box 29, Athens, OH 45701)

FLUKE #9, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 54 pgs.

This is the twentieth anniversary of *Fluke*. That's a long time to write a zine, so congratulations are in order. There are a couple articles with a couple of the co-founders of *Fluke*, which started in Little Rock, Arkansas, and they explain the beginning in detail. The interview with Jason White, who currently plays guitar in Green Day, is a really interesting. Mike Scott, of Christ On Parade infamy, contributes a list of

encounters with Kurdish and American soldiers, the kindness of strangers, being stranded, death threats, and the demonstrations in the region that have been largely unreported in the western press. Nine focuses on what she did and saw in a way that acknowledges that her presence in the area is usually met with a curiosity somewhere around the scope of, "Why did you go there?" In many ways, this handwritten zine feels like a personal letter and is a brief, yet fascinating record of events from an amazing writer. —Steve Larder (nine@jinxremoving.org)

MANUAL DEXTERITY, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed, 46 pgs.

Manual Dexterity is an indie rock music zine with a slick layout and a bunch of great-looking photos, but the zine really suffers as it lacks a discernible sense of personality within its pages. Included are interviews with Tokyo Police Club, Mixtapes, The Aquabats, and a few others. The questions asked in every single interview are from a perspective that the reader is already familiar with the bands/artists being interviewed, without any background or context to what the band is all about. Also included are music reviews and top ten lists from members of various bands, again, with no background as to who they are. While the interviews are all in depth and the writers know their stuff, the way they're presented here leaves all of the content seriously lacking character, and, therefore, ultimately uninteresting. —Mark Twistworthy (Manual Dexterity, PO Box 1616, Monticello, MN 55362)

reviews up the wazoo and so on. If you're acquainted with *MRR*, you likely know what to expect, and if you aren't, the sheer amount of stuff being tossed in your direction by this will keep you up to your ears in things punk for quite a while. For me, this was more like running into an old friend you used to constantly hung out with twenty-seven years ago—nice, warm 'n' familiar feelings towards 'em, and it's good to see they're doing all right and still raising a ruckus, but once you get past the superficial pleasantries and start delving a little deeper, you start to remember why you stopped hanging around 'em so much. —Jimmy Alvarado (MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

MOSH ZINE #14, RM 6,

8 1/2" x 6", printed/color cover, 60 pgs.

It's always interesting to read zines from a foreign culture. There's a familiarity because, on some level, you know what to expect. You know how it feels to read a zine, but it's twisted in the smallest ways which can be refreshing. *Mosh* is concerned mainly with the Malaysian pop punk scene. The layout is very appealing, but the content fails to reach that same level of quality. Most of the interviews consist of the same questions, something I really can't stand. Not only is it boring to read the same questions over and over, it's just lazy. The interviewer doesn't have to bring anything to the table. Answers that are given as a kind of bait for further development are just left there, as if completely ignored, or as if a part of some awkward non-sequitur as the interview keeps going. I

playing live music and the quickening spiral of unfortunate events that can happen. I totally related to that story and hope there's more like that to come. The author also has a website with a lot more writing, check it out at iknowbilly.com. —Steve Hart (Proof I Exist, C/O Billy, 318 C Frost Rd., Sandia Park, NM 87047)

QUICKDUMMIES,

12" x 15", newsprint, 8 pgs.

This zine has an in-depth interview with long-time *MRR* columnist Mykel Board which is informative and interesting, touching upon his ongoing legacy with *MRR*, his association with the Yippie movement, and a little bit about some of the bands he's been in and the book that he's written. Also included is an article contribution from Mykel documenting his recent travels in Mexico. The editor of this zine doesn't have much to say and there's not much else here in the way of content, leaving this as a quick and worthwhile read if you're a fan of Mr. Board's writing and work. —Mark Twistworthy (quickdummies.com)

SEWER TROUT, Free ("but trades and dollars happily accepted"), 5 1/2" x 8", photocopied, 16 pgs.

Fandom manifests itself in many forms. From the annoying—e.g., obsessive record collecting of each iteration of every record a band does and patches on butt flaps—to the banal—e.g., T-shirts—it rarely expresses appreciation (insofar as it seems to fall short of giving back). Turning friends on to a band and interviewing a band are two exhibitions of fandom that seem much

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more appreciative. Thus this zine is perhaps one of the most appreciative displays of fandom that I have ever seen. You see, *Sewer Trout* is not a zine about feces but one dedicated to the long gone band, Sewer Trout. It has stories of how one of the curators first heard of Sewer Trout, how the two curators met and bonded over Sewer Trout, why they like the band (the corollary being why you check them out), an interview with Hal MacLean (of Sewer Trout, duh), and artwork gathered from Trout records. I, like Joe and Ben from D.C. (who together are the source of *Sewer Trout*), think that Sewer Trout was a great band—coincidentally, I was listening to their *Flawless 10*” the evening before I received this here zine in the mail for review—and am sorry to see they aren’t as well regarded as many other bands from the same place in space-time. That said, I don’t think that I’m biased when I declare that this zine is great. I do love the focus of *Sewer Trout*, but it is the intent and execution that make this zine not only innovative but also one of the most captivating demonstrations of fandom that I have encountered. Even if you have heard Sewer Trout and already love them (or are dumb and think that they suck), you should still check this zine out merely because of the ingenuity and the “if not you, then who?” inspiration. —Vincent (The Sewer Trout Fanzine, 1409 Longfellow St., Washington, DC 20011)

SHOCK & AWE #3, \$?,
8 1/2” x 11”, printed, 68 pgs.
Shock & Awe is a fiercely independent music magazine produced by the members of the Knot Records collective in Malaysia... and it’s really great. It would be hard for me to imagine that every punk into crust, d-beat, and or political hardcore wouldn’t find something of interest in here. This zine (which is written completely in English) has so much more to offer than just that though, including columns about cops in Malaysia, punk tourism (with advice for foreign bands wanting to play in Malaysia), cassette tape appreciation, a Malaysian guide to punk labels, bands, and venues, an article about being a female punk in a male-dominated Malaysian scene, and much more. Throw in interviews with d-beaters Pazahora, the punk band Pusher, a bunch of reviews, and you are left with one great, inspiring zine. —Mark Twistworthy (shockawemedia.wordpress.com)

SHUT UP AND LOVE THE RAIN,
\$4 + shipping, 7” x 5 1/2”, offset w/ color cover, 64 pgs.
I have read and reviewed a few zines by Minneapolis’s Robnoxious in the past. He has done quite a bit of solid work that is admirable because

he has a range of topics to write about; from boat punx to gender identity. One of his newer zines is *Shut Up and Love the Rain*, a tell-all about Rob’s sexual experiences. The first fifteen pages were wildly uncomfortable to read, as they were about experimentation and discovery in his childhood, with most of it illustrated in comic form. No doubt it was a liberating experience for him to write about all that, but most of us would feel like total creepers while reading it and skip ahead to the next section. More in my area of interest and comfort zone, there are a few great essays on how being queer means more to Rob than just being attracted to other guys. Then it gets really good in the second half of the zine, when the parents who raised Rob in a repressive Christian Science household reveal that his dad is coming out as a transgendered woman at the age of sixty-five. Rob’s interview with his dad Rachel is just mind-blowing because of how easily Rob accepts and supports his choices. I would like to think that I’d be as cool as Rob was to his dad under the same circumstances, but, wow, that would take some getting used to! —Lauren Trout (Microcosm, 222 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

SMARTY PANTS #2,
5 1/2” x 8 1/2”, printed, 32 pgs.
This is the “Women’s Health Issue” of *Smarty Pants*. Cervical and other cancer, the importance of smiling, alternative menstrual pads, and other topics are covered. Instead of utilizing dry, facts-and-statistics reporting, this is undertaken with a more creative style from many different contributors. Testimony, how-to, and creative writing are all employed to educate, which is obviously one of the most valuable and practical functions a zine can serve. By the way, I am a punk, so when I hear people talk about the importance of smiling I’m like, “Ah! Hippie!” but this is still a good zine. —Dave Brainwreck (smartypantszine@gmail.com)

SMOG CITY MAGAZINE #2, \$5,
6 1/2” x 10 1/2”, glossy, 57 pgs.
This shit is so rad. The main piece, “Highway 126,” reminisces in the nostalgic and outrageous grittiness of pulp novels. The presentation of the zine reinforces that idea of mystery with layered pages that open up to reveal text and illustrations. *Smog City Diaries*, an excerpt by Dick Wegmans, is an unusual (and funny) exploration of writer’s block and ennui in general. Fake, vintage ads are strewn throughout the three stories. I have to say I didn’t read the second chapter of “The Night Snacker,” a short episode of Mulnix’s serialized story, only because I’ve

got to get my hands on chapter one first! —Katie Dunne (Mulnix, PO Box 29753, LA, CA 90027)

SPIDDER #15, 5 1/2” x 8 1/2”,
copied, 16 pgs.
Spider has a few interesting comics and a few stories of life on the road and traveling. I enjoyed reading the stories but they were not very long. It would have been more enjoyable if *Spider* was larger in content, but a good effort, overall. —Steve Hart (Spider, 1925 Hwy. 69 S., Savannah, TN 38372).

SUBJECT #1, 8 1/2” x 5 1/2”,
printed, 28 pgs.
Three band interviews (Shitty Limits, Brain Flannel, Brown Sugar) and a review section. The interviews are split right down the middle between interesting, perceptive questions and more uninspired stock ones. Two of them seem to be done over email, which often makes logistical sense, but also makes me wish they had happened in person. Comparatively, the freshness and energy of the real-time, in-person interview is palpable. A solid and straightforward first issue by someone with real drive for documenting and exploring punk music. —Dave Brainwreck (turnuptuneout@hotmail.com)

SUGAR TIT #2, 5 1/2” x 8 1/2”,
copied, 16 pgs.
Sugar Tit is a collection of reviews of Japanese pop, noise, rock, and experimental music. There are a few records that sound pretty interesting, especially the noisy and/or Krautrock-influenced records. This is fairly thin and it really is just sixteen pages of reviews, so there’s not a whole lot there. I also wish that they would have included a price. The cover is very interesting, a Xeroxed piece of film that features four faces, similar to the *Let It Be* album cover. —Steve Hart (phatnpunky.com)

TALES OF BLOOD AND ROSES
#1, \$4.75 ppd., 4 1/4” x 5 1/2”,
copied, 60 pgs.
Tales of Blood and Roses is something of an erotic/horror/goth version of *Reader’s Digest*. It includes plenty of poems and short stories about encountering ghosts, wolfmen, vampires, and ghouls in the dead of night...and then fucking them! Hard! The dark and twisted side of love is covered here and in a rather entertaining and visually interesting manner. This zine also includes some full color photos of goth damsels posing provocatively in black metal band corpse paint, a hilarious single panel comic strip (Look out, “Marmaduke”!) about the always-funny subject of necrophilia, and a poem by one C.M. Sidewell that begins with the great line, “My tongue navigates a rhythm in

your pussy purse,” which I liked so much, I had it embroidered on a throw pillow. Looks really nice in my living room. —Andy Conway (talesofbloodandroses.com)

YOU DON’T GET THERE FROM HERE #18, \$2, 4” x 5 1/2”, 36 pgs.
Another great issue from Carrie in her diary comic. I always get excited when I see the familiar sized envelope in my post with the recognizable handwriting on the front. It means I usually put aside whatever I’m doing to instantly get up to date with Carrie’s life in L.A. In this issue she writes/draws about traveling to Oaxaca to visit some friends as well as take in some of the local history as she wanders the ancient ruins of Monté Alban. There’s more to it than that, obviously, but I don’t want to reveal too much. What I really like about Carrie’s comics is that she manages to cram so much into her work which goes beyond the sometimes mundane aspect of diary comics (“today I did this and this and this and it was good”) but also is not ashamed of revealing her doubts and self-criticisms, which, combined with her charming drawings, makes a wonderful, engaging read. —Steve Larder (Carrie McNinch, PO Box 49403, LA, CA, 90049, cmcninch@gmail.com)

ZINES: WHAT THEY ARE, AND WHY THE VERMILLION PUBLIC LIBRARY SHOULD HAVE A ZINE SECTION, \$?, 7 1/2” x 5 1/2”,
color copied, 8 pgs.
Phil from Vermillion, South Dakota has just by far made the best and most creative request for zine donations I have ever seen. He sent *Razorcake* a letter explaining how, with the support of his community, he convinced his local library to let him set up a zine section. Included with the letter is the zine that he distributed to people in his town to get them in on his plan. The title is self-explanatory. Phil put a lot of time and effort into making this zine library happen. Now that it’s up and running, he is still putting work into asking for donations in a creative way instead of just posting requests on the internet. If you have any zines that you can donate, I definitely recommend sending them to this guy, because it seems like he is passionate enough about zines to make sure that they will be well cared for and read. —Lauren Trout (Phil, 326 Center St., Vermillion, SD 57069, vermilllest@gmail.com)



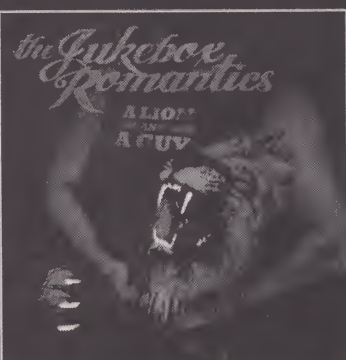
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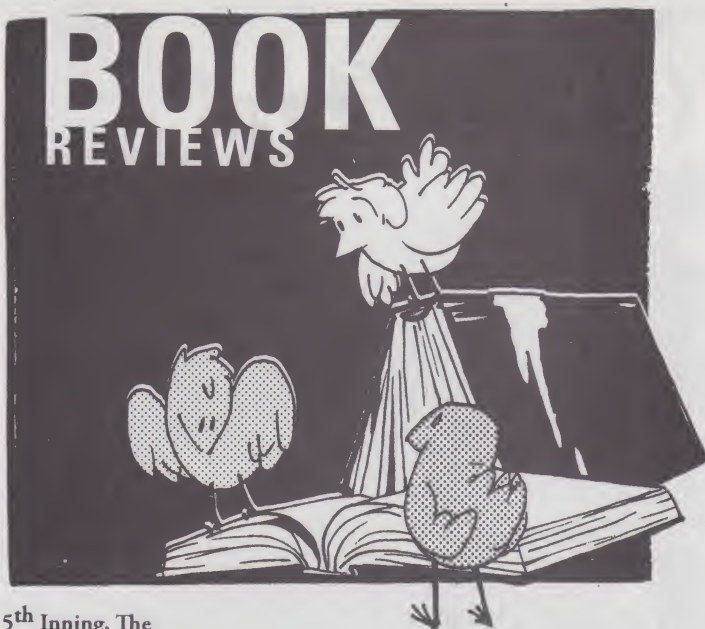
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BOOK REVIEWS



5th Inning, The
By E. Ethelbert Miller, 163 pgs.

In the game of baseball, once five innings are completed, the game is considered an official game. E. Ethelbert Miller uses this as a metaphor for his life, where he finds himself somewhere in the sixth inning, knowing that he has now completed an "official life." I spent four mornings reading this book, watching the sun come up through the trees by my house, and while I don't think that at forty-two years old that I have completed my five innings yet, I couldn't help but take stock of my own life. I thought of my

Our foci are a bit different. *Roctober* covers a vast spectrum of music and really shines when covering legitimate, overlooked, relevant, long-time musicians who never got their full due. Their interviews are immaculately researched, there's palpable compassion and interest in the subject, there's a great flow and dialogue, and they go out of their way to put a complete story arc on an entertainer's body of work. It's a "novel-length" approach to covering music in an era where we're constantly reminded that people's attention spans rarely last longer than a mouse click or one swipe of the scroll wheel.

Roctober is, also, very proudly, a print zine that is surviving when so many have died, in part because it never selected what to cover based on who's advertising, publicists' prompts for coverage, or a subject's popularity. It's a zine for and by people who are fans of the zine, who trust that *Roctober* will treat them right. That's when it struck me. *Roctober* is the paper and pulp analog to the musical entertainers they cover. It's a zine that would be lauded much more heavily in a different time and under different circumstances, but its existence now makes it all the more powerful because it's still continuing to create against such tremendous odds.

This book is a collection of ten interviews and articles from *Roctober's* span, from its beginnings in 1992 to the present. All ten interviews did their job. By the end of each, I wanted to check out the interviewee's music and I felt like I had an unprecedented, candid glimpse into their lives, both as musicians and as people. While the genres covered—country (David Allan Coe), soul (Sugar Pie DeSanto), garage (Sam the Sham), alien (Zolar X), gay disco (The Fast, as Man 2 Man), Armenian pop (Guy Chookoorian), and good, ol' rock'n'roll (Billy Lee Riley, The Good Rats)—may seem too hodge podgey, *Roctober* has a secret epoxy resin. First, it fully understands that music genres are extremely flexible; they're fine starting points to bend into the warm water of meaningful conversation. Second, *Roctober's* dedicated staff pulls the humanity out of each of the interviewees and lets them talk without judgment, malice, or irony. Even when uncomfortable and

"Each chapter revolves around specific issues (e.g., School, Sex, Fans, Violence). The effect of this approach is not unlike having each chapter function as a delicious snack."

—Kevin Dunn, *The Rest Is Propaganda*

own relationships with my family. To be honest, this book just struck me to the bone. Beautifully written, every sentence is extremely well-crafted and labored over. Each sentence is another peek into the man's heart. Although *The 5th Inning* can sometimes be overbearingly sad, it's never depressing. There is a joy expressed and it is often uplifting. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to everyone. So far, this is the best book I've read this year. —Steve Hart (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

Edible Secrets—A Food Tour of Classified US History
By Michael Hoerger and Mia Partlow, 121 pgs.

An awfully intriguing and fun read examining the relationship between food and some of the more infamous moments and figures in modern American history. Amazingly true stories about how Jell-O played a role in the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg; the influence Coke and Pepsi have had over the White House for decades now; and the United States government's assassination attempts on Fidel Castro via poisoned Chinese food are just some of many shocking tidbits Michael Hoerger and Mia Partlow divulge here. This book provides a lot of proof via reprinted "secret" documents and FBI files, which helps back it all up as being more than just crazy conspiracy theories involving junk food and soda. Worth it just for finding out the favorite snacks of some of the world's worst dictators of the past century (one of them really enjoys nougat). Another excellent book from Microcosm, who have released some really great stuff. —Andy Conway (Microcosm Publishing, Microcosmpublishing.com)

Flying Saucers Rock'n'roll: Conversations with Unjustly Obscure Rock'n'Soul Eccentrics: The Best of Roctober
Edited by Jake Austin, 284 pgs.

Ever think you've been separated at birth? That a sibling in a different town with different access and a slightly different, deep record collection is living in tandem with you? That's how I feel about *Roctober* and *Razorcake*.

thorny subjects are brought up—sexism, racism, wife beating—the insights unearthed are thought-provoking. Humans making music are often a messy, flawed bunch and there's some awesome shit tackled in those grey areas.

Maybe I'm old fashioned and speaking inside a tomb to other mummies, but shouldn't the best of music zines (and their book collections) do their damndest to turn the reader onto new music—even if it's old—and keep re-stoking the fires back to the first time you heard music that really moved you?

I'll leave you with some words of wisdom by the man Sam The Sham, a nice coda to live by: "Be yourself and you'll never be by yourself." —Todd (Duke University Press, 905 West Main St., Suite 18B, Durham, NC 27701)

How Shall I Live My Life—On Liberating the Earth from Civilization
By Derrick Jensen, 302 pgs.

I know we've all seen the news lately and it is difficult to find much hope out there. Sure, there are small incidents of people treating each other well, but for the most part, it's feeling pretty bleak. Of course, there are a few ways to respond to this news. We can drink and party—and there's nothing wrong with that, I suppose—or we can look for solutions to some of the problems we face. Derrick Jensen is in search for some of the solutions to these times of despair with interviews of amazing authors, philosophers, activists, and environmentalists. Each person interviewed brings new insights onto difficult questions, like, "Where do we go after peak oil?" and "What's wrong with getting cheap [merchandise] from Taiwan?" *How Shall I Live My Life* may not be a book for everybody, since not everyone wants to be confronted in their pocketbooks and lifestyle

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choices. I will allow that there are also people who just don't give a shit about things like this, but for those who do want to find a way to return to a lifestyle that doesn't involve trading in nine hours of our day, every day, for a few pieces of paper, this could be the book for you. It drives home deeply that there is a serious crisis modern civilization is facing but does allow for hope and a solution. —Steve Hart (PM Press, PO Box 23912, Oakland, CA 94623)

versed in all the sordid details of the Crass mythology, so he sticks to sharing his own impressions of the bigger forces at work, and one comes to understand how crushingly difficult it was for Ignorant to reside in the world of Crass that he helped create.

The autobiography was composed by Ignorant sitting down and telling his life story in bits and pieces to Steve Pottinger, who transcribed and edited Ignorant's reminiscences. That fragmented structure of delivering what are basically a collection of anecdotes is

“More than just crazy conspiracy theories involving junk food and soda.”

—Andy Conway

Edible Secrets—A Food Tour of Classified US History

Rest Is Propaganda, The

By Steve Ignorant (with Steve Pottinger), 300 pgs.

This is Steve Ignorant's autobiography; his attempt to add his voice to those writing the history of Crass. Here are the basic elements of his story: Stephen Williams was born in 1957 to a broken, working class home. He was mostly raised by his grandparents, hated the oppression of school, and drifted more-or-less aimlessly until he saw The Clash play live in 1976. After that, he decided he wanted to be the singer of a punk band. He changed his name to Steve Ignorant, enlisted the help of drummer Penny Rimbaud and a few other liked-minded people, and called themselves Crass. The band rigorously stuck to their anarchist ideology, DIY ethos, and personal principles. In so doing, they virtually invented the template for anarcho-punk and gained a worldwide following, but also created an oppressively stifling situation that was unsustainable for members of the band. After Crass collapsed under its own weight, Steve was left rudderless, questioning who he was and what he wanted from life. He briefly joined Conflict, another anarcho-punk band, albeit a less ideologically rigorous one, as well as Schwarzenegger. Neither band was as successful as Crass, but Ignorant eventually came to peace with always living under the enormous shadow of Crass, and all the baggage—good and bad—that came with that legacy.

There is a really good chance you knew all of that already. If you didn't and are wondering what all the fuss is about Crass, this book isn't going to help you much. Steve Ignorant divides up his autobiography into three sections (Before Crass, During Crass, and After Crass) and, quite tellingly, the Crass section is by far the skimpiest. This is definitely not a history of Crass. For that, go check out George Berger's excellent and exhaustive *The Story of Crass*. Ignorant skims across the Crass years with lightning speed, rarely pausing long enough to discuss any of the details, let only the characters, drama, or issues that characterized the band's history. If you are looking for Ignorant to dish the gossip or stab his bandmates in the back, you will be sorely disappointed. He seems to assume that his readers are already well-

carried over directly into the book. Each chapter is usually five to six pages long. They revolve around specific issues (e.g., School, Sex, Fans, Violence) or events (e.g., Sixth Form, Dial House, Iceland). The effect of this approach is not unlike having each chapter function as a delicious snack (a chocolate chip cookie or, if you're a Brit, a Hit biscuit). You can consume one or two anytime you want and be pleasantly satisfied. Hell, you can even eat the whole pack and really enjoy it. But in the end, it just isn't filling, nor is it equivalent to a healthy meal. And that is true of this book as well. It is an absolutely enjoyable read, but ultimately unsatisfying. I wanted to know more about the specific details alluded to in Ignorant's life (and many that were just completely ignored). I wanted the characters to be more fully formed. Dear reader, forget about gaining any insights about the other members of Crass. They are never on the page long enough to get anything but the most cursory treatment.

So, if you're looking for depth or heft, this just isn't it. But to be fair, *The Rest Is Propaganda* doesn't pretend to be anything more than what it is: a collection of Ignorant's anecdotes. And, ultimately, that is what makes this book so engaging. Because, if truth be told, Steve Ignorant comes across as one of the most honest, self-reflective, and unpretentious blokes in punk. For that reason, *The Rest Is Propaganda* is far more enjoyable than Penny Rimbaud's *Shibboleth* (and, unfortunately, the comparisons are inevitable so why not face them head on). Sure, Rimbaud's autobiography has more substance, but Rimbaud (bless him) often comes across as a pretentious prat. Ignorant (bless him) clearly isn't as deep a thinker as Rimbaud, but is probably far more self-critical.

In the end, the *The Rest Is Propaganda* comes across as a collection of stories that Steve Ignorant could be telling in the corner of the bar/pub. Sure, the stories leave much to be desired, but the story-teller comes across as extremely likeable, while also deeply flawed and, to his further credit, highly self-critical. Damn, if I don't want to buy the next several rounds and keep him talking. —Kevin Dunn (Southern, southern.com)



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Dwarves, The: *The Dwarves are Born Again*: CD/DVD

Now that there's a brand new offering of Dwarves audio debauchery in our hands, the question once again arises: why is it that HeWhoCanNotBeNamed—the most famous naked punk rocker this side of GG's mouldering old bones—never seems to have a boner when he plays? Isn't a floppy, limp dick antithetical to the Dwarves' brand of lust-engorged teenage testicle rock? You'd think the whole band would be running around with erections that last well over four hours and look like they're about to suddenly shoot away from their bodies like fat, purple bottle rockets. But boners or not, the Dwarves are back and not a moment too soon. If the swashbuckling lifestyle of drug-addled, booze-fueled, porn-steeped horn-doggery has been recently given a douchey twist by the celebrity Chas. Sheen, the right honorable exemplars/progenitors of that venerable lifestyle have returned to reclaim it and reanimate its bedraggled corpus with psychotic, rutting Yeti Blood, which is twenty-three times stronger than that piss-water Tiger Blood that Mr. Sheen has been peddling.

Since *Blood, Guts & Pussy*, the Dwarves have been basically giving you, song by song, the option of being beat over the head with a poofy pink wig of cotton candy or a nail-spiked dildo. Personally, I've always found

the drubbing by dildo to be the most satisfying, on some Neanderthal level or another. And while *Born Again* does have a few tunes that teeter on the edge of falling into that category of "candy-coated Epitaph-style pop punk," there are amped up tit-twisting scorchers on this album that would stand up alongside anything off of *Blood, Guts & Pussy*.

Fleshtones: Pardon Us for Living but the Graveyard Is Full: DVD

I got this as a bonus when I preordered The Fleshtones' newest album and don't know if it will be sold on its own. New York's Fleshtones, if you don't know, are one of the first bands to show their '60s garage influences on their punk sleeves (contemporaries of DMZ, from

"Isn't a floppy, limp dick antithetical to the Dwarves' brand of lust-engorged teenage testicle rock?"

—Aphid Peewit

Dwarves, The: The Dwarves are Born Again

Lyricaly the songs are oozing with such blatant self-celebratory, mythologizing cockiness, one can't help but visualize the old time porn footage of Ron "Hedgehog" Jeremy proudly felling himself. But if you've got the cockiness to do it, then you would almost be a fool not to blow your own horn. This is, after all, the realm of ithyphallic gods and they and their super-charged reproduction organs don't have to answer to anyone.

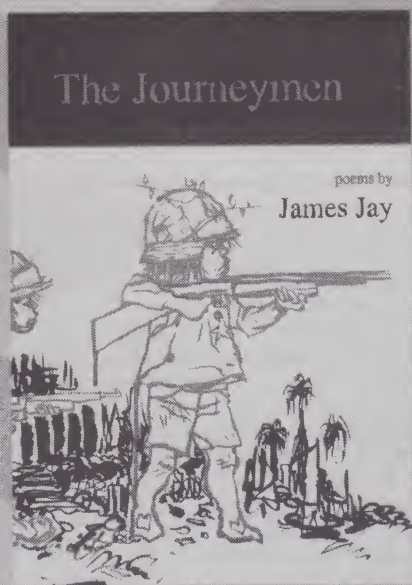
It's possible that you might've been expecting something of a Dwarves' swan song with this disc—a toothless, simpering half-hearted offering—especially after all those rumors about Blag having his clock cleaned by that precious little dork singer from Queens Of The Stone Age. And maybe you thought that the self-described "Jesus Christ of sin and vice" would slink off somewhere and quietly spoon with HeWho for the rest of his days. Not even close. *Born Again* is a cocked up aural blend of amphetamines and Spanish fly, a white trash pervert's orgitorium for the ears. Blag and his depraved cohorts have indeed returned and upped the ante. Tesco Vee, it's your turn now. —Aphid Peewit (Greedy, PO Box 170481, SF, CA 94117)

Massachusetts). They were around for the CBGBs boom but weren't really accepted by that crowd. The Fleshtones are lifers. They've been at it since 1976, still record and tour regularly and shit. I saw them play a house show recently! In my not so humble opinion, The Fleshtones didn't really come into their own until the late '90s when they found producers who could capture their blend of '60s garage and need-to-be-witnessed-live vibe. The DVD says it is based on *Sweat*, Joe Bonomo's biography of the band (a great read... it goes even further underground into New York's rock'n'roll/punk scene than *Please Kill Me*) but it's more of a companion piece, as it doesn't get as in-depth as the book. Most of the footage is only from the past few years but it gets across the sense of what keeps the band going. Interviews include band members past and present, label people, and famous friends (most notably, Peter Buck of R.E.M.). Here's to wishing someone expands on this documentary! —Sal Lucci (Yep Roc)



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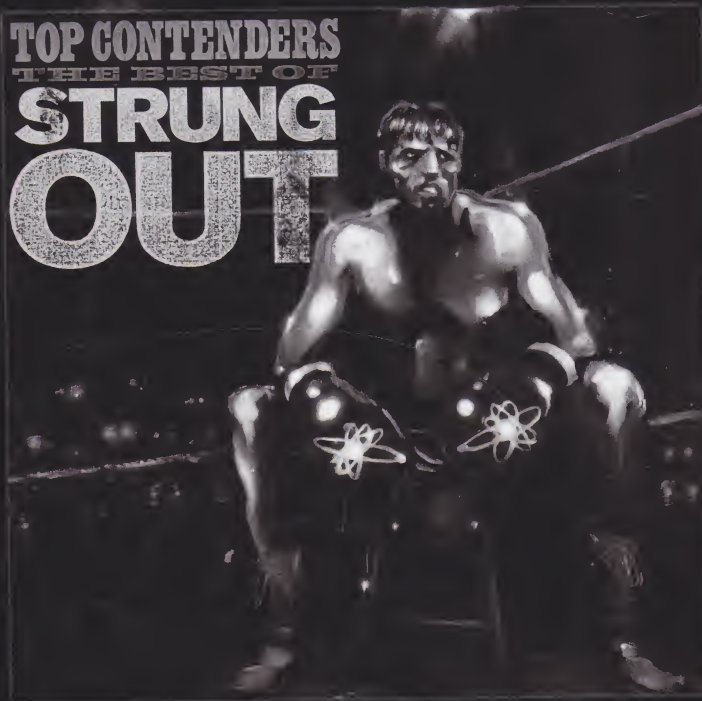
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